STARBLAZER

SPACE FICTION ADVENTURE IN PICTURES No. 107

20p

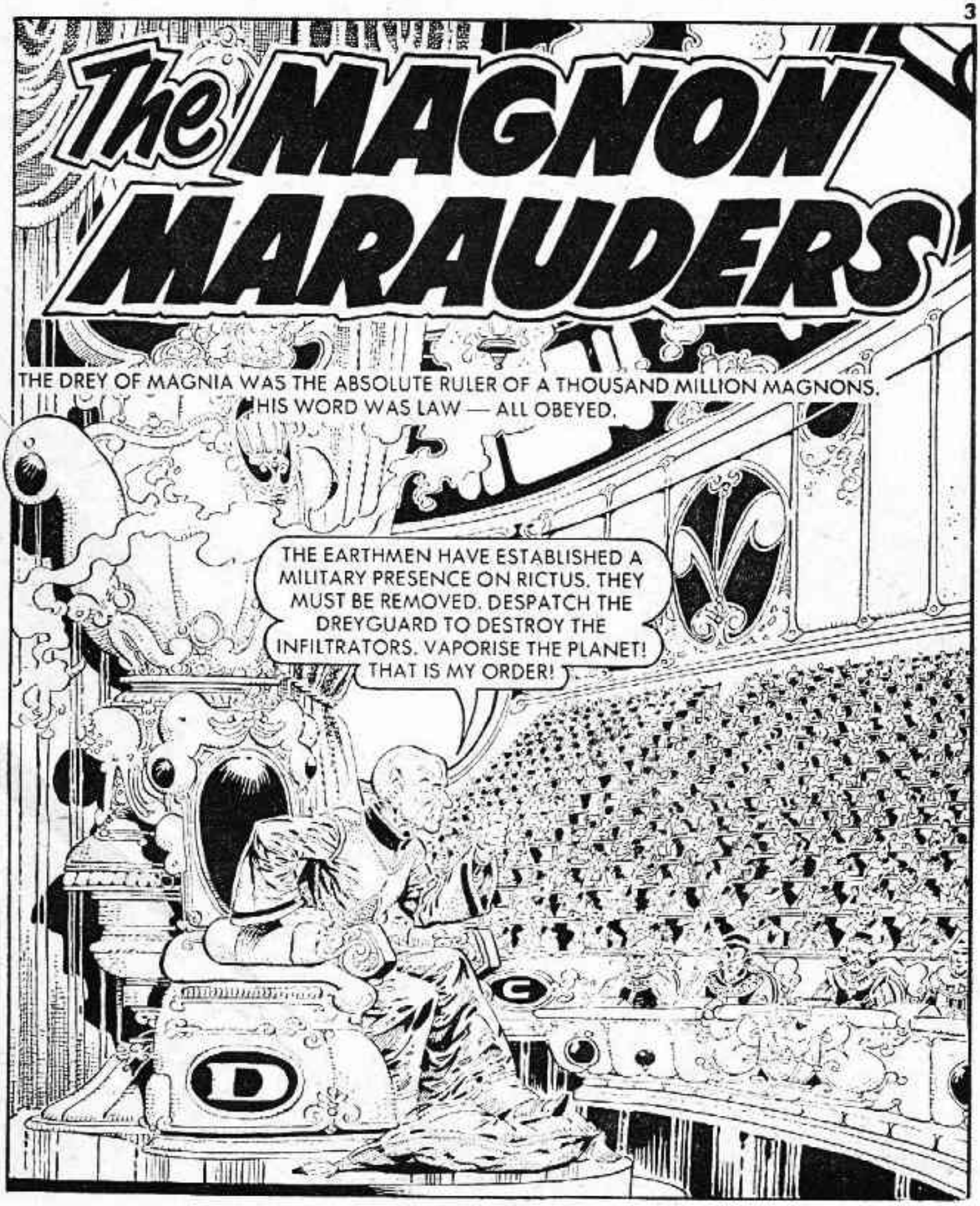
THE MAGNON MARAUDERS

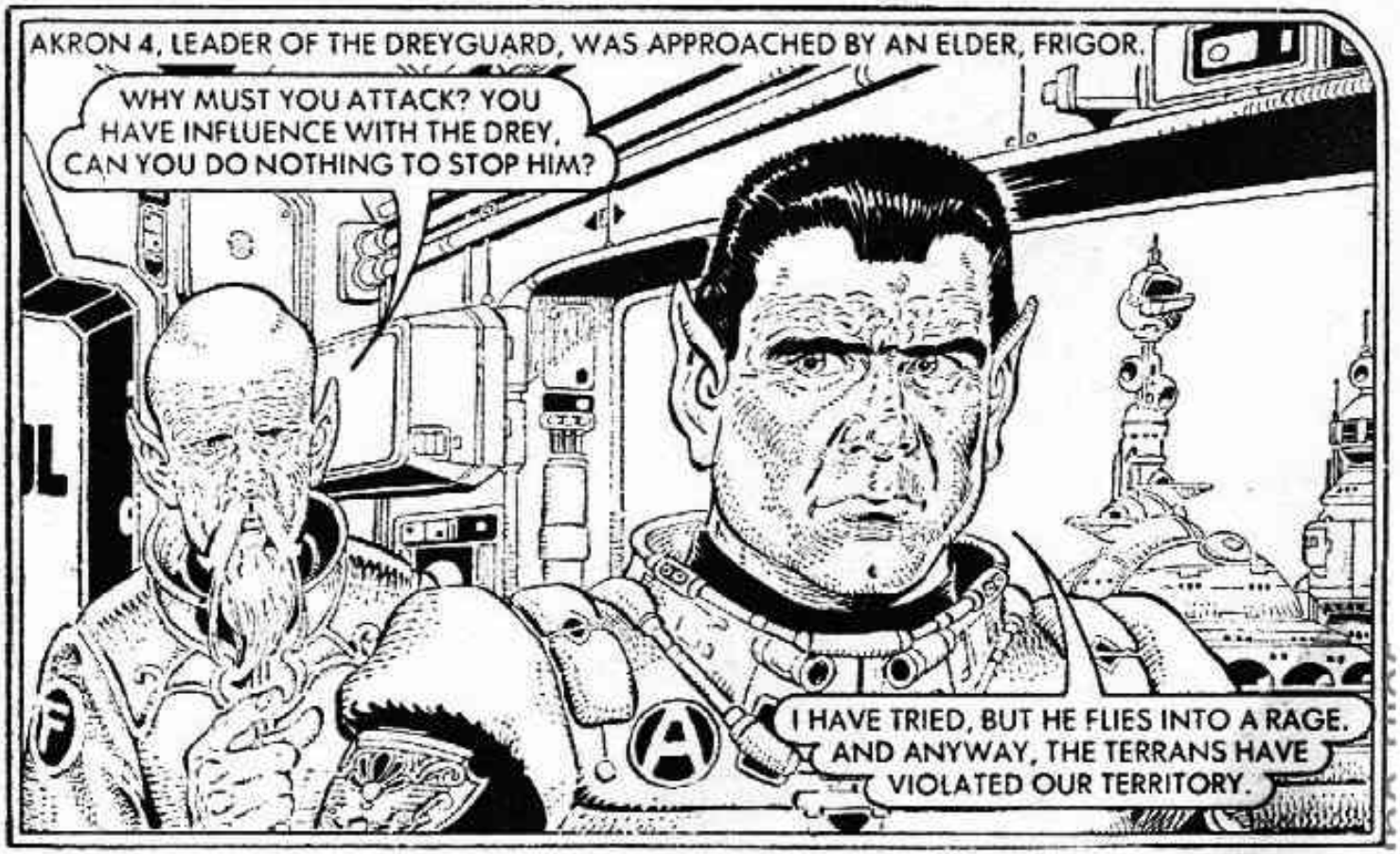
STARBLAZER

INTERSTELLAR SPACE IS A VAST AREA CONTAINING MANY PLANETS OF VARYING SIZES. AS EARTH EXPANDED ITS COLONIAL HORIZONS IT DISCOVERED OTHER INHABITED WORLDS. MOST OF THEM WERE FAIRLY PRIMITIVE AND WERE LEFT TO EVOLVE AT THEIR OWN PACE. BUT MAGNIA WAS A DIFFERENT MATTER ALTOGETHER.

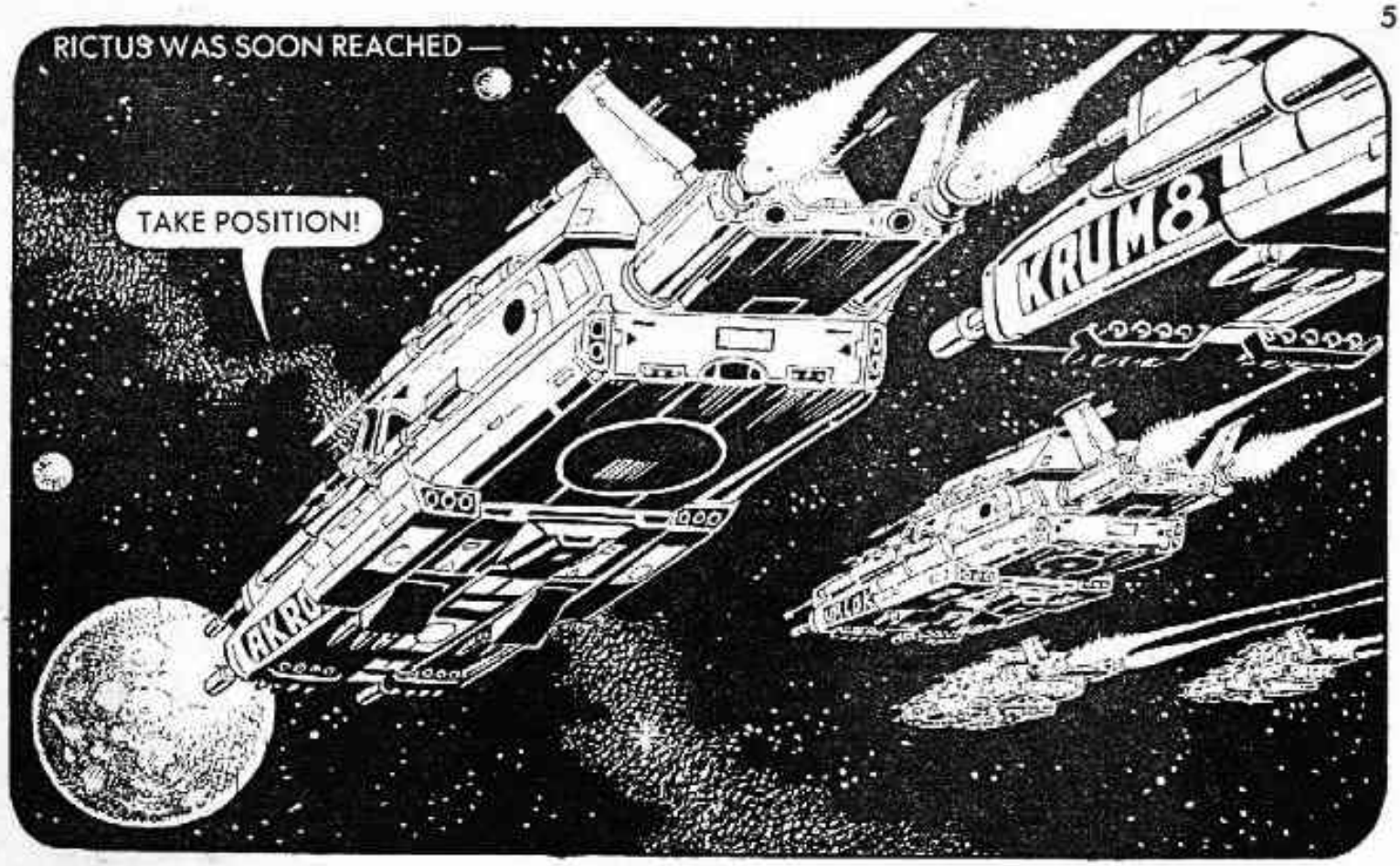
MAGNIA WAS AT ROUGHLY THE SAME STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT AS EARTH, AND IN THE PROCESS OF COLONIAL ADVANCEMENT. IT WAS AGREED NOT TO INTERFERE IN THE OTHER'S SECTOR, TO LIMIT MILITARY INSTALLATIONS IN THE AREA, AND TO ESTABLISH TRADING LINKS.

THEN IN 2236, RICTUS, A DEAD PLANET CONTAINING A TERRAN MILITARY COMPLEX, DUE TO ITS IRREGULAR ORBIT, STRAYED INTO MAGNON SPACE . . .

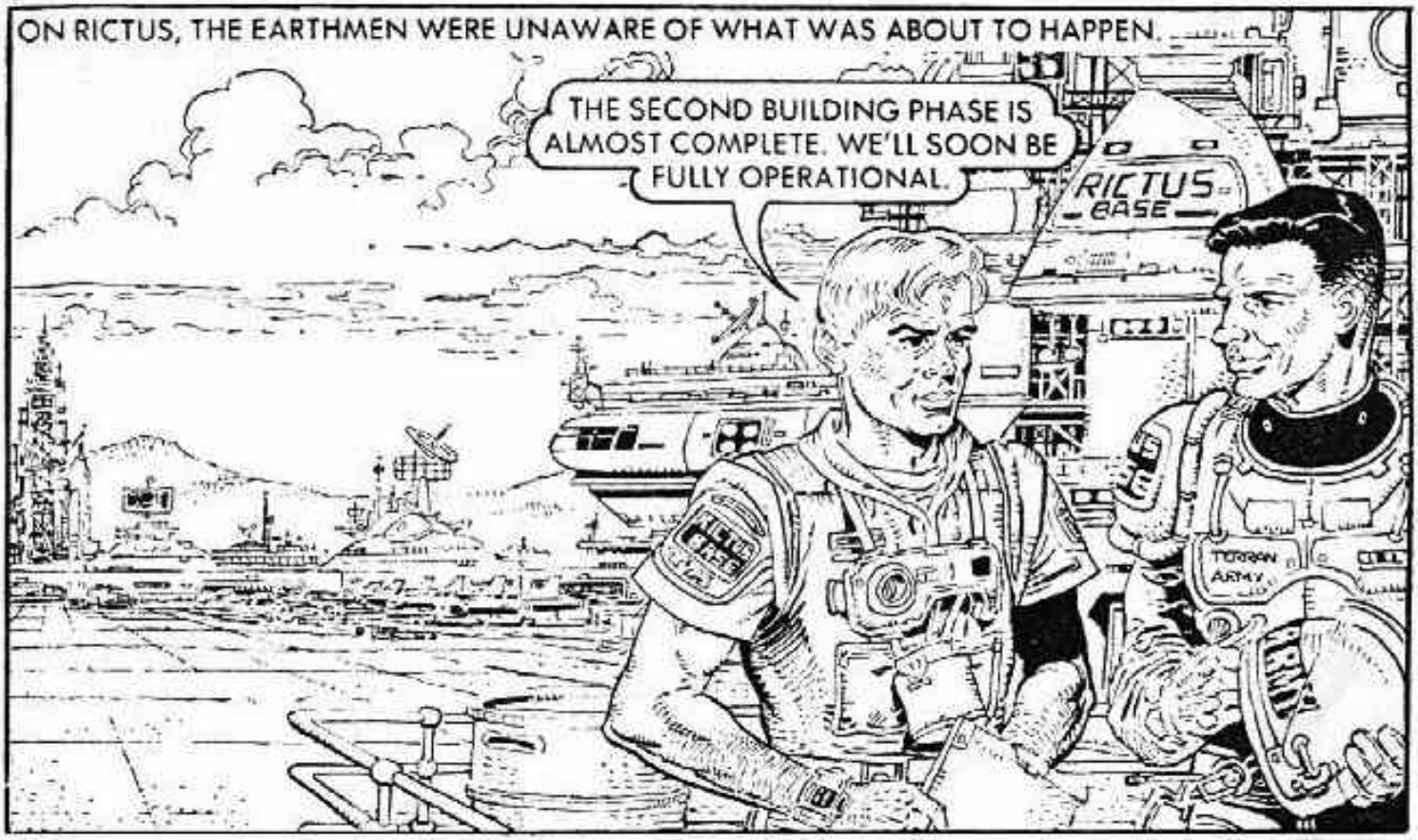

The MAGNON MARAUDERS
THE DREY OF MAGNIA WAS THE ABSOLUTE RULER OF A THOUSAND MILLION MAGNONS. HIS WORD WAS LAW — ALL OBEYED.
THE EARTHMEN HAVE ESTABLISHED A MILITARY PRESENCE ON RICTUS. THEY MUST BE REMOVED. DESPATCH THE DREYGUARD TO DESTROY THE INFILTRATORS. VAPORISE THE PLANET! THAT IS MY ORDER!
D
G

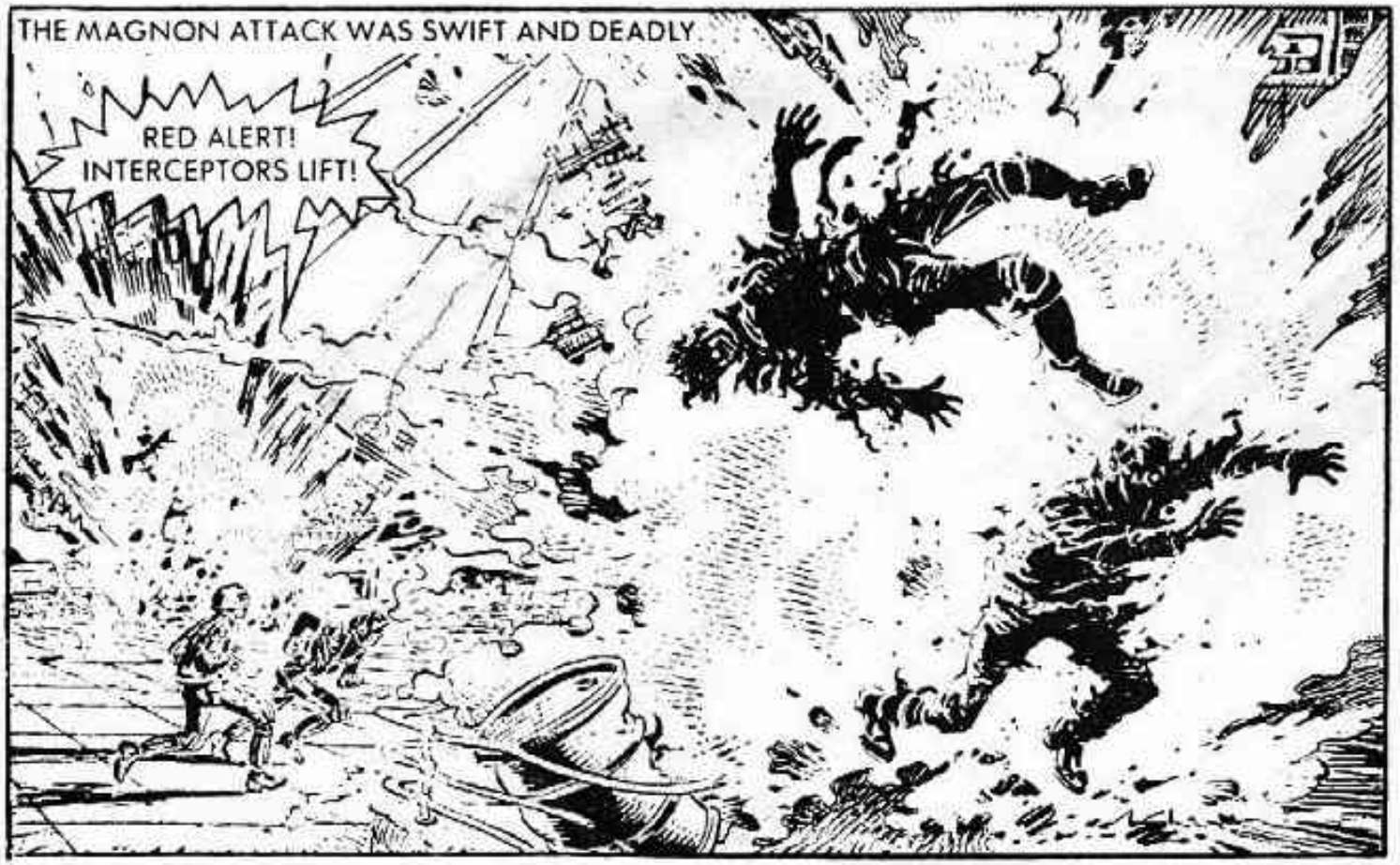

AKRON 4, LEADER OF THE DREYGUARD, WAS APPROACHED BY AN ELDER, FRIGOR.
WHY MUST YOU ATTACK? YOU HAVE INFLUENCE WITH THE DREY, CAN YOU DO NOTHING TO STOP HIM?
I HAVE TRIED, BUT HE FLIES INTO A RAGE. AND ANYWAY, THE TERRANS HAVE VIOLATED OUR TERRITORY.

THE DREYGUARD TOOK OFF —
NO GOOD WILL COME OF THIS VENTURE.
THE DREY IS ALL-POWERFUL. WE MUST OBEY HIM.

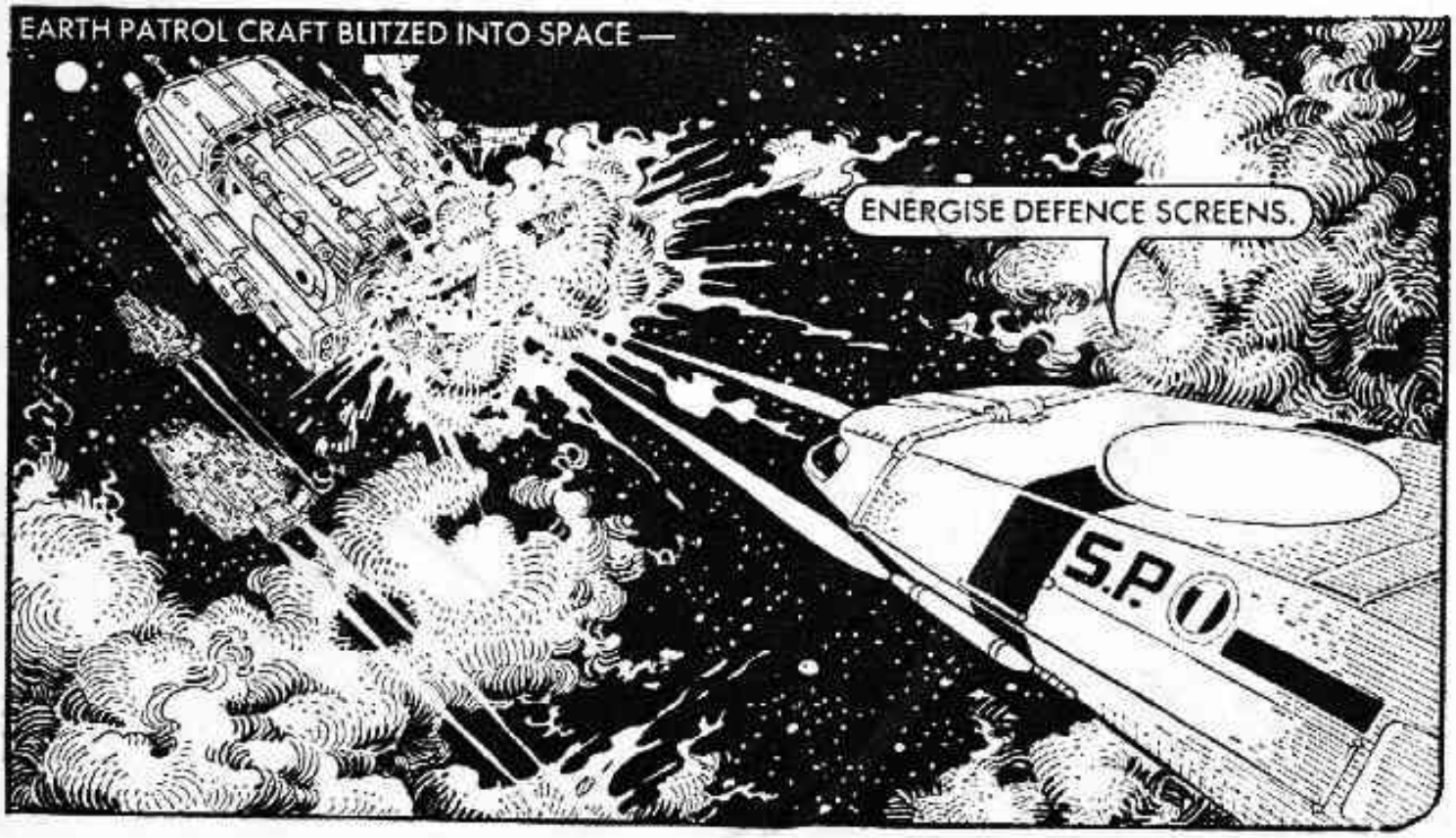

RICTUS WAS SOON REACHED —
TAKE POSITION!
KRUM 8

COM
ALL SHIPS MOVE INTO FIRING MATRIX — INTERPHASE NUCLEONIC GENERATORS.

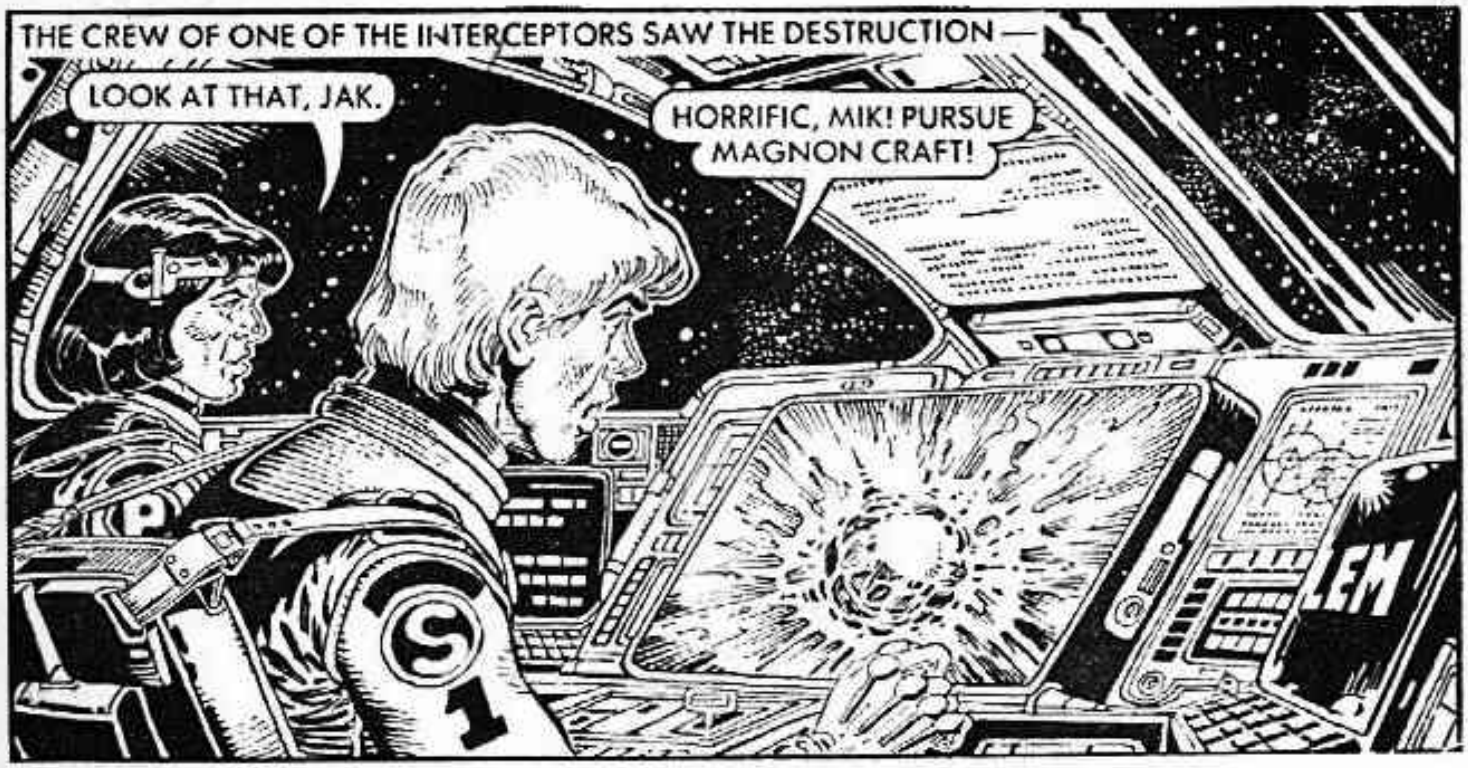

ON RICTUS, THE EARTHMEN WERE UNAWARE OF WHAT WAS ABOUT TO HAPPEN.
THE SECOND BUILDING PHASE IS ALMOST COMPLETE. WE'LL SOON BE FULLY OPERATIONAL.
RICTUS BASE
TERRAN ARMY


THE MAGNON ATTACK WAS SWIFT AND DEADLY.
RED ALERT! INTERCEPTORS LIFT!

RICTUS WAS LASHED BY THE CO-ORDINATED ASSAULT OF THE MAGNON FORCE BEAMS.


EARTH PATROL CRAFT BLITZED INTO SPACE —
ENERGISE DEFENCE SCREENS.
S.P.O

BUT DESPITE THE EFFORTS OF THE PATROL, THE MERCILESS POUNDING OF THE DISRUPTOR BEAMS RUPTURED THE CORE OF THE PLANET . . .
S.P.1
. . . AND RICTUS CEASED TO EXIST.


THE CREW OF ONE OF THE INTERCEPTORS SAW THE DESTRUCTION —
LOOK AT THAT, JAK.
HORRIFIC, MIK! PURSUE MAGNON CRAFT!
P
S
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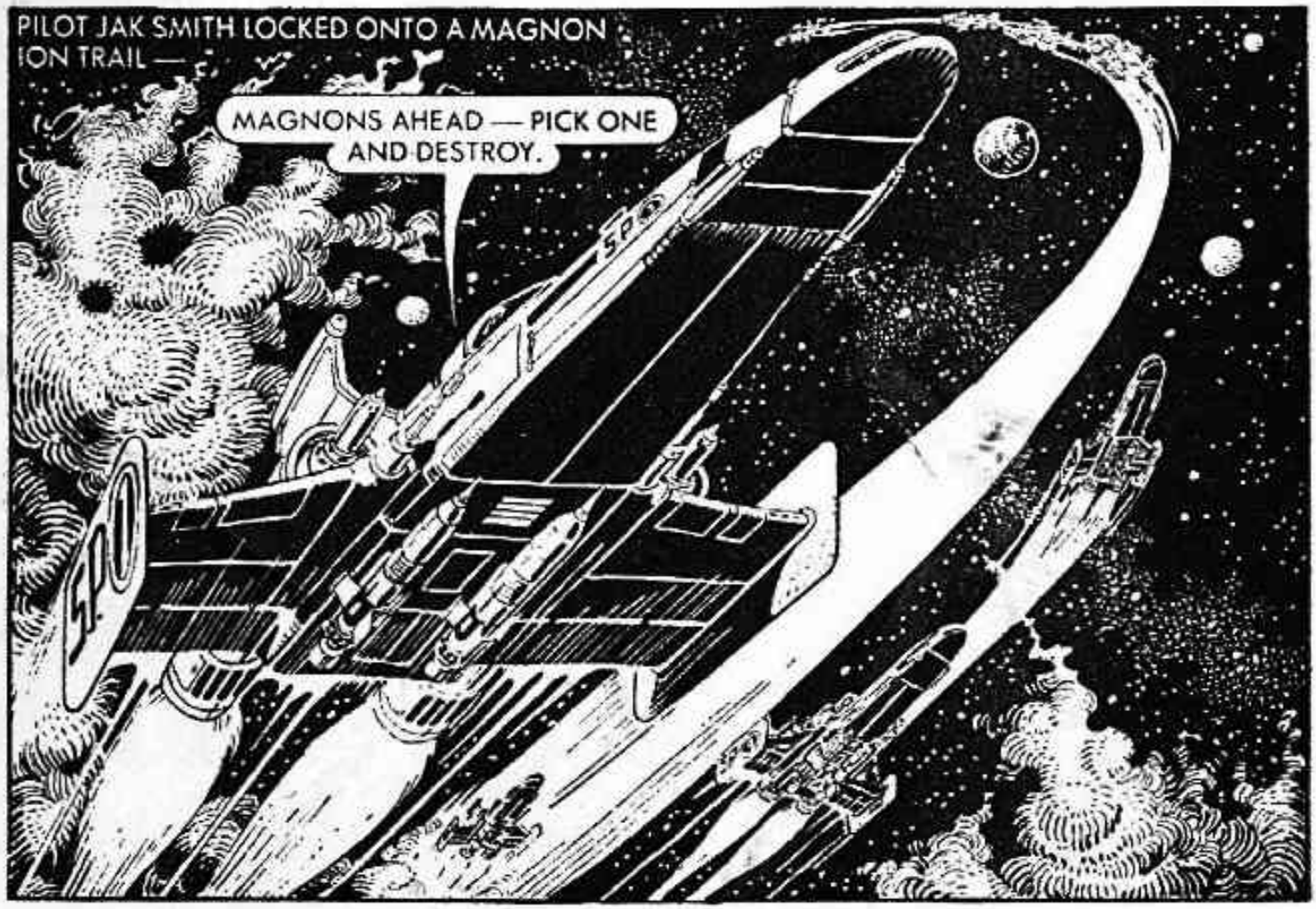
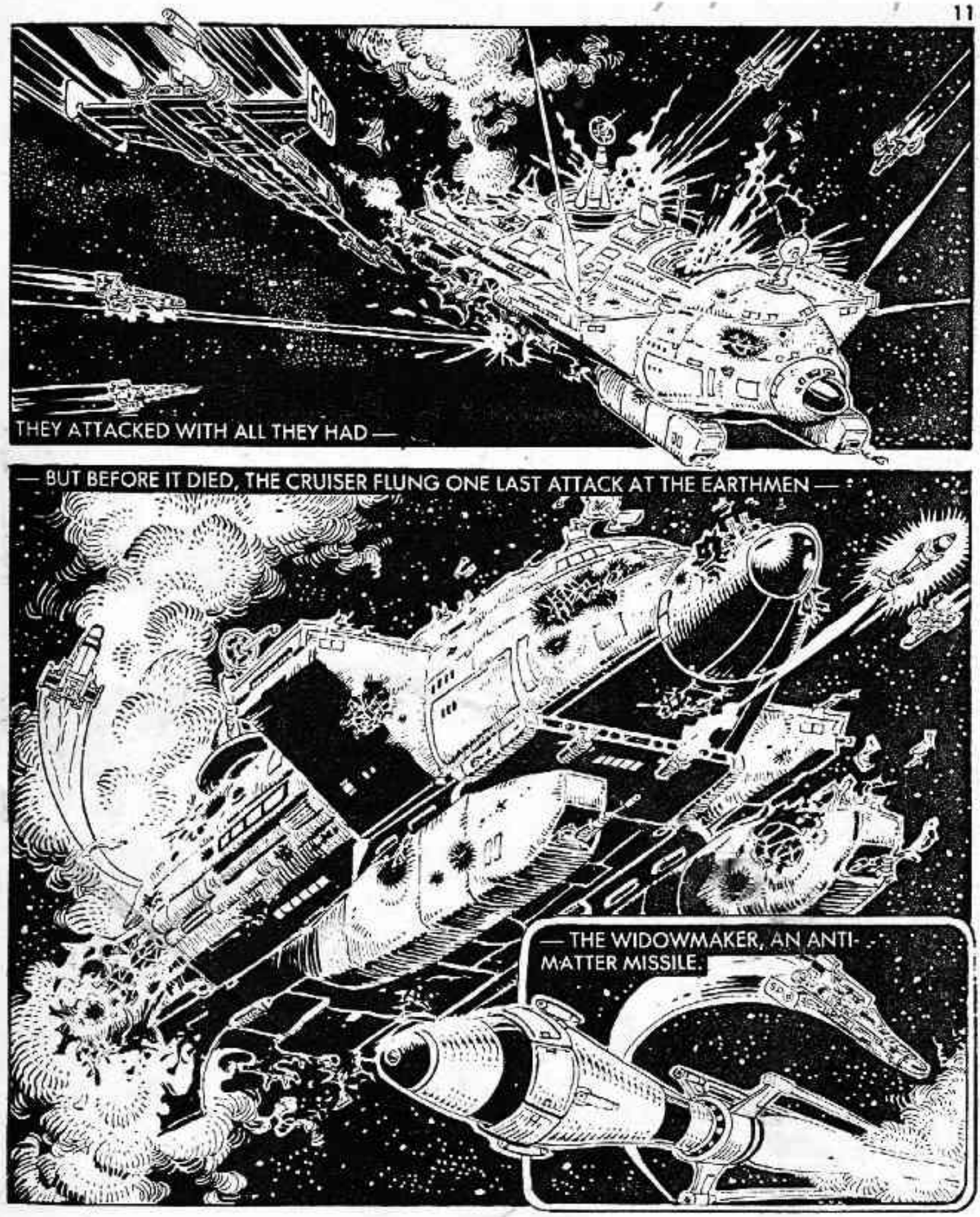
LEM

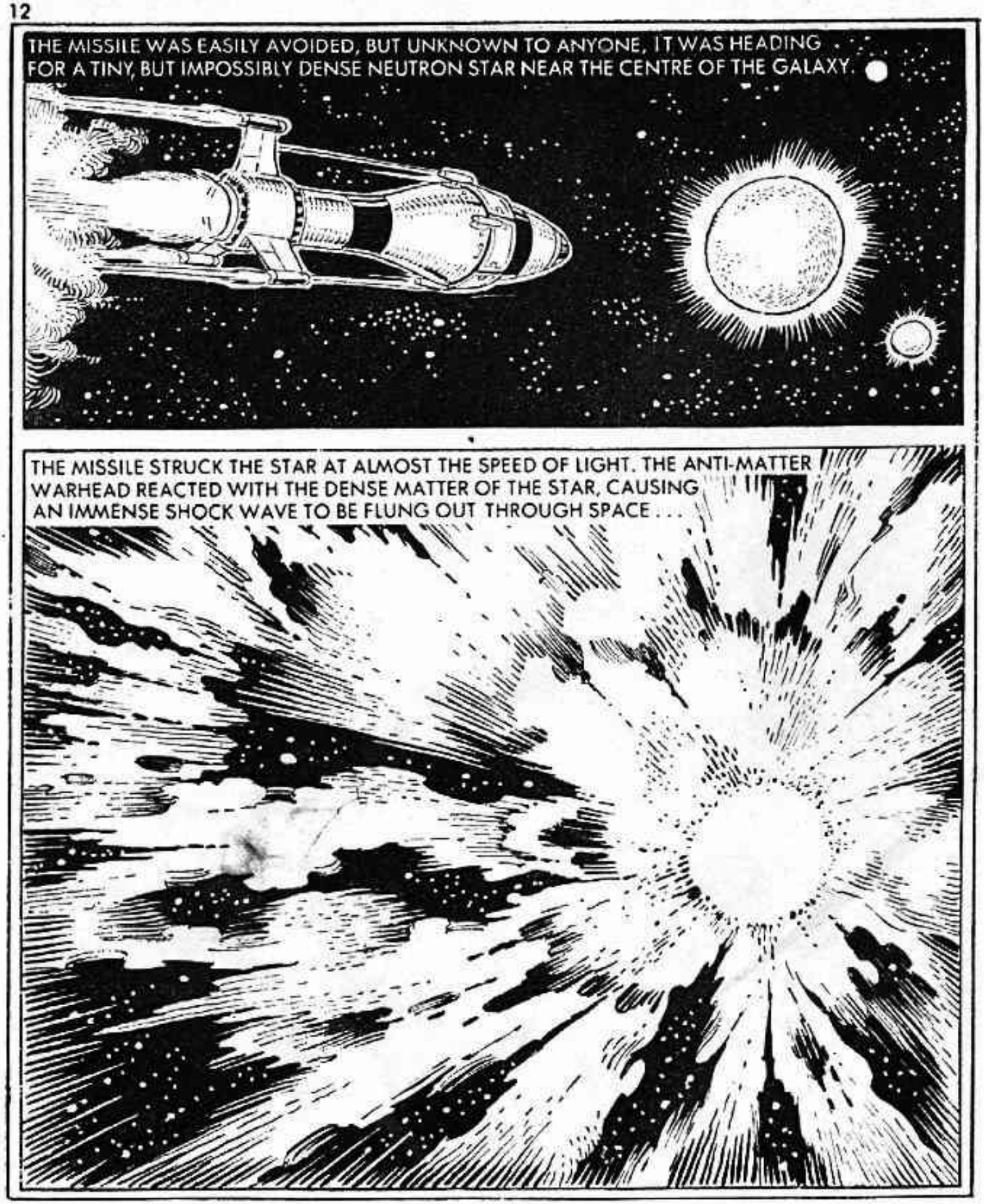

PILOT JAK SMITH LOCKED ONTO A MAGNON ION TRAIL —
MAGNONS AHEAD — PICK ONE AND DESTROY.
SPO
SPO

JAK AND HIS GUNNER, MIK JONES BLASTED A MAGNON CRAFT OUT OF THE SKIES —

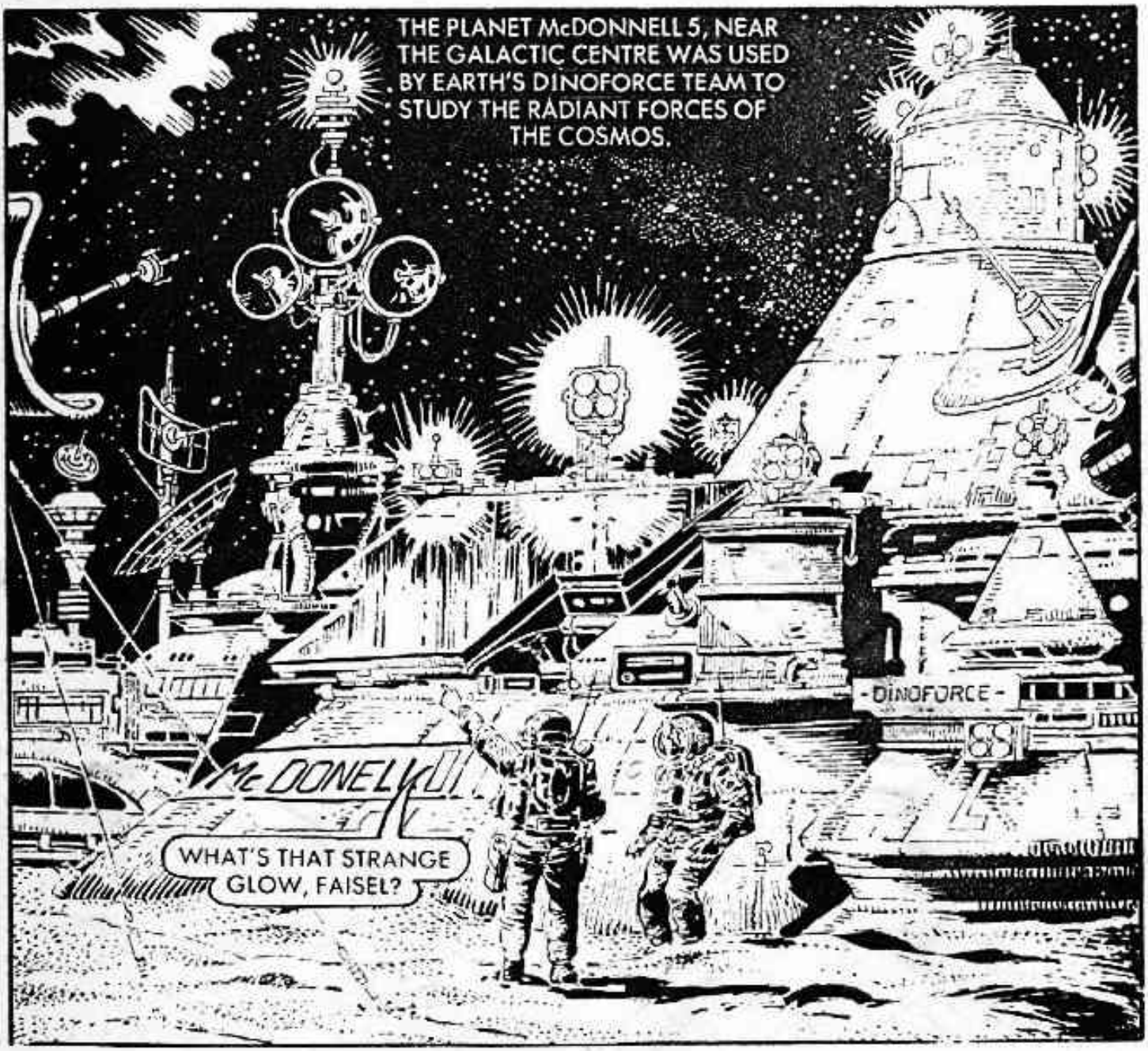
AFTER DEALING WITH THE MAGNON FLEET, THE SURVIVING INTERCEPTORS TURNED TO RENDEZVOUS WITH THE MAIN EARTH TASK FORCE SUMMONED TO RICTUS —
ALL SHIPS HEAVE TO — UNIDENTIFIED VESSEL APPROACHING.

A MAGNON ALPHA CLASS CRUISER! HERE'S THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME. TRANSMIT THE ATTACK SIGNAL. LET'S TAKE THIS MAGNON GIANT.
IT'S ABOUT TIME WE HIT BACK HARD. PATROL, ATTACK PATTERN OPEN. GO!


THEY ATTACKED WITH ALL THEY HAD —
— BUT BEFORE IT DIED, THE CRUISER FLUNG ONE LAST ATTACK AT THE EARTHMEN —
— THE WIDOWMAKER, AN ANTI-MATTER MISSILE.


THE MISSILE WAS EASILY AVOIDED, BUT UNKNOWN TO ANYONE, IT WAS HEADING FOR A TINY, BUT IMPOSSIBLY DENSE NEUTRON STAR NEAR THE CENTRE OF THE GALAXY.
THE MISSILE STRUCK THE STAR AT ALMOST THE SPEED OF LIGHT. THE ANTI-MATTER WARHEAD REACTED WITH THE DENSE MATTER OF THE STAR, CAUSING AN IMMENSE SHOCK WAVE TO BE FLUNG OUT THROUGH SPACE . . .

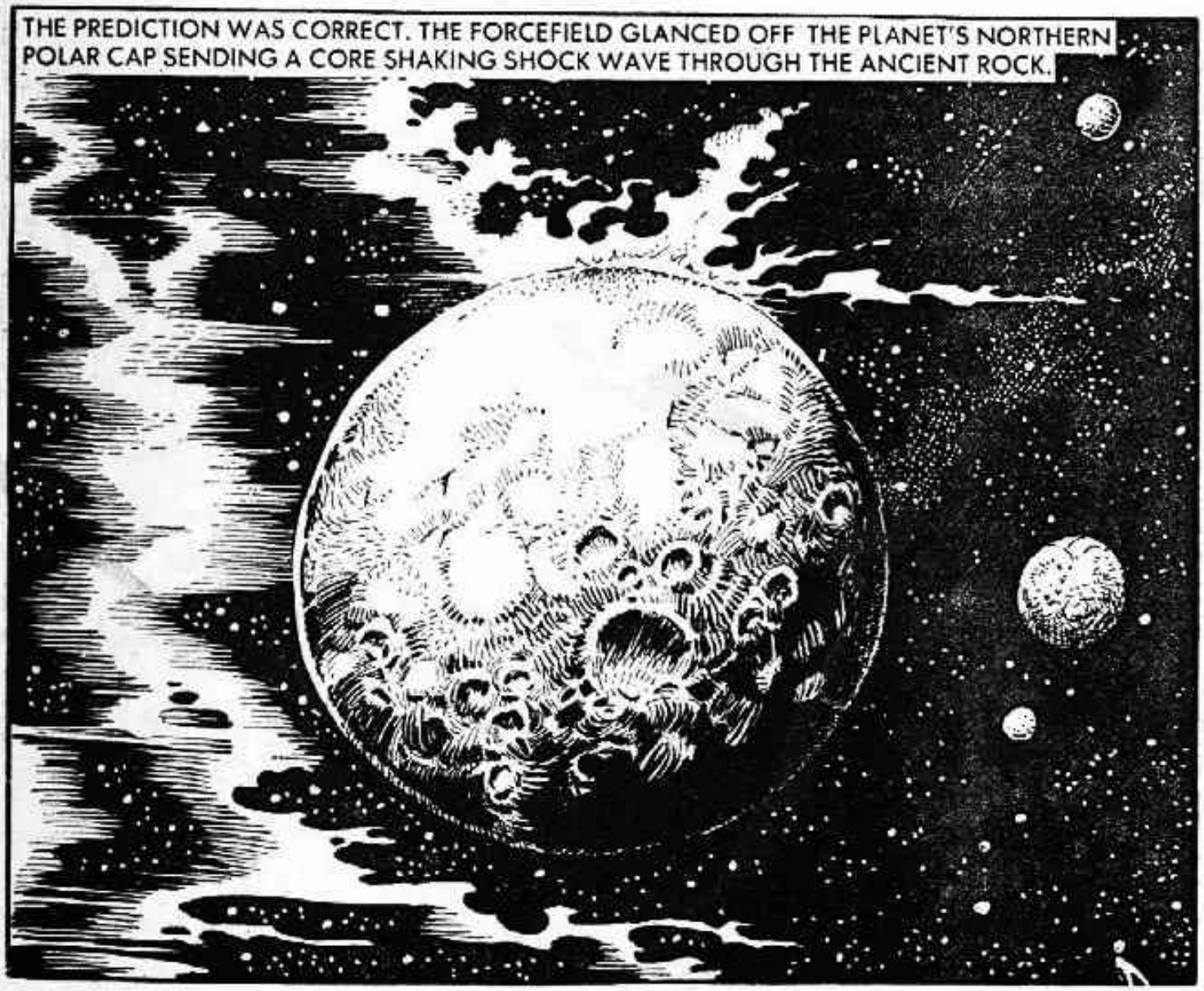
. . . WHICH DESTROYED EVERYTHING IN ITS PATH.


THE PLANET McDONNELL 5, NEAR THE GALACTIC CENTRE WAS USED BY EARTH'S DINOFORCE TEAM TO STUDY THE RADIANT FORCES OF THE COSMOS.
-DINOFORCE-
McDONELL
WHAT'S THAT STRANGE GLOW, FAISEL?

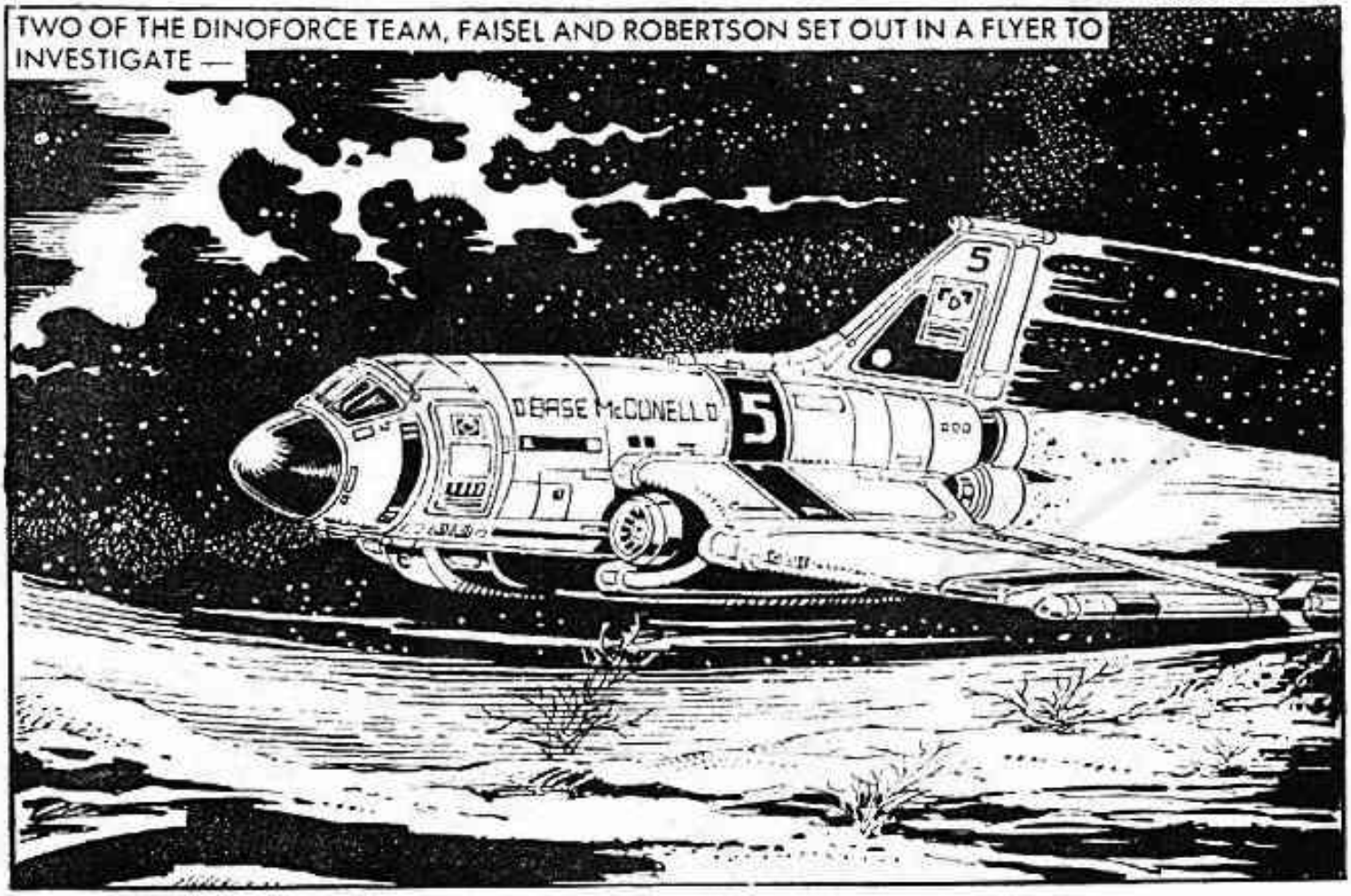
THE TEAM LEADER, ALVAR FAISEL, STUDIED THE GROWING GLOW.
IT'S APPROACHING AT A CRAZY VELOCITY. GET THE BIGGEST TRACKER ON IT.

IN THE STATION'S CONTROL CENTRE.
4DKLM-85
IS IT ON A COLLISION COURSE?

YES! IT'S A FORCE FIELD OF SOME KIND, BUT IT'S VIBRATING IN A PECULIAR WAY. IT WILL BRUSH THE PLANET IN APPROXIMATELY NINETY SECONDS. I THINK WE SHOULD BE READY FOR ANYTHING.


THE PREDICTION WAS CORRECT. THE FORCEFIELD GLANCED OFF THE PLANET'S NORTHERN POLAR CAP SENDING A CORE SHAKING SHOCK WAVE THROUGH THE ANCIENT ROCK.

EARTH TREMORS ROCKED THE SURFACE OF THE PLANET.
WHAT A SHOCKWAVE! I WANT TO SEE THE POINT OF IMPACT. TRACK THAT WAVE WITH EVERYTHING WE'VE GOT.


TWO OF THE DINOFORCE TEAM, FAISEL AND ROBERTSON SET OUT IN A FLYER TO INVESTIGATE —
BASE McDONELL
5
5

BY THE POWERS! IF THAT'S WHAT THE TAIL END CAN DO, WHAT WOULD THE FULL FORCE BE LIKE?
I WANT TO KNOW ALL YOU CAN FIND OUT ABOUT WHAT DID IT.
FAISEL REPORTED TO EARTH.
. . . THE WAVE IS DEADLY POWERFUL, AND IS CURRENTLY ON COURSE FOR OUR FLEET IN THE MAGNON AREA.
I'LL WARN THE FLEET! RETURN TO EARTH AT ONCE FAISEL, AND INSTRUCT YOUR MEN TO INFORM ME PERSONALLY IF THERE IS ANY CHANGE.

BUT THE FLEET HAD MORE PRESSING PROBLEMS.
S.P. 1
MAGNON SHIPS APPROACHING, CAPTAIN.
BREAK FORMATION.

GOT ONE, CAPTAIN!

AS SMITH LATCHED HIS TRACER BEAM ONTO A MAGNON WARSHIP, HE DRIFTED INTO THE FIRST STRANDS OF THE ENERGY FIELD.
WHAT IN SPACE IS THAT AHEAD, CAPTAIN?
I DON'T KNOW! BUT I'M GETTING OUT OF THE WAY.

HE WAS JUST IN TIME —
I DON'T BELIEVE IT! LOOK WHAT IT'S DONE TO THE MAGNON.
S.P. 1

THE FORCE WAVE CAUSED TERRIBLE HAVOC.
LOCK ONTO THE WAVE — I NEED ITS CO-ORDINATES.

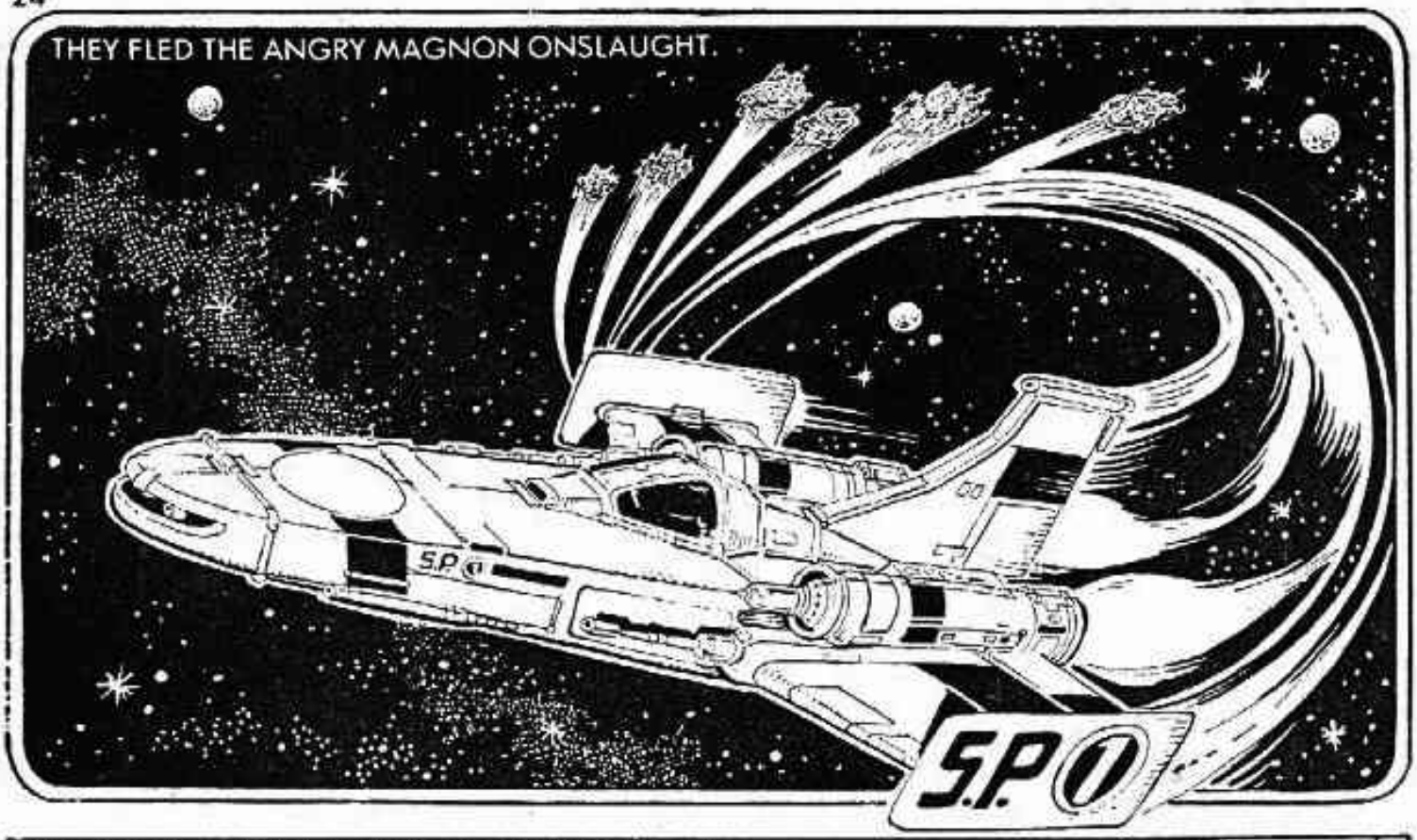
THE FORCE WAVE LANCED ON THROUGH SPACE.
LOOK AHEAD OF THE WAVE! THAT'S A MAGNON HOSPITAL SHIP — WE MUST WARN THEM!
S.P.
JAK QUICKLY BROADCAST A DESPERATE MESSAGE . . .
. . . BUT THE ENERGY OF THE WAVE ABSORBED HIS SIGNAL.
TOO LATE, CAPTAIN!
SP

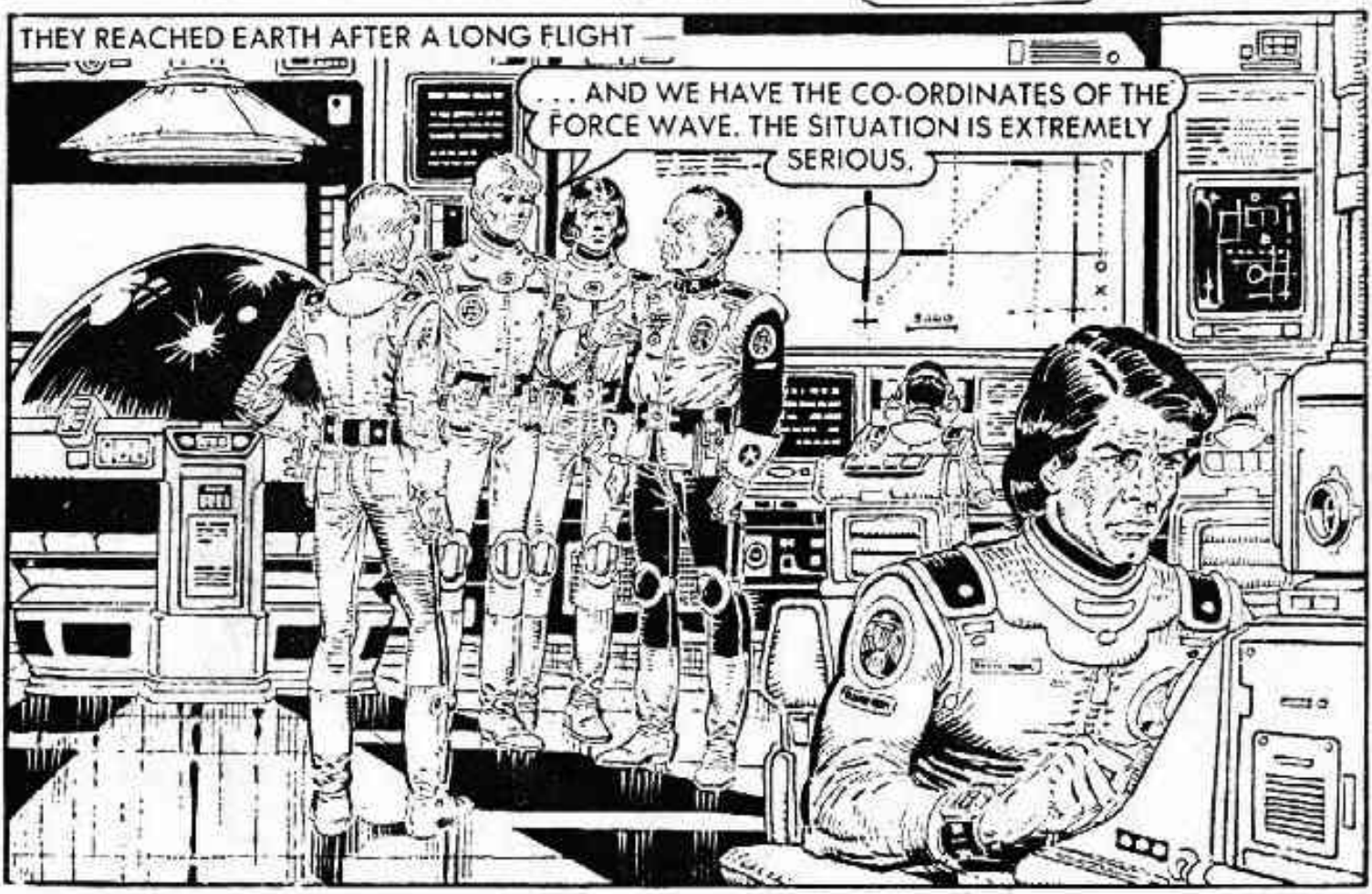
JUPE! THE HOSPITAL SHIP'S GONE.
I HAVE THE CO-ORDINATES OF THE SHOCKWAVE'S COURSE.

ON BOARD A NEARBY MAGNON CRAFT —
SENSORS SHOW AN UNUSUAL ENERGY PATTERN, SIR. IT MAY BE THAT THE EARTHMEN HAVE A NEW WEAPON.
MURDERING VERMIN. THEY DESTROY A HOSPITAL SHIP! UNTIL NOW I FOUGHT THE TERRANS RELUCTANTLY THINKING THEM A HUMANE RACE — NOW I SHALL KILL THEM.

ALL SHIPS ATTACK.
AKRON 4

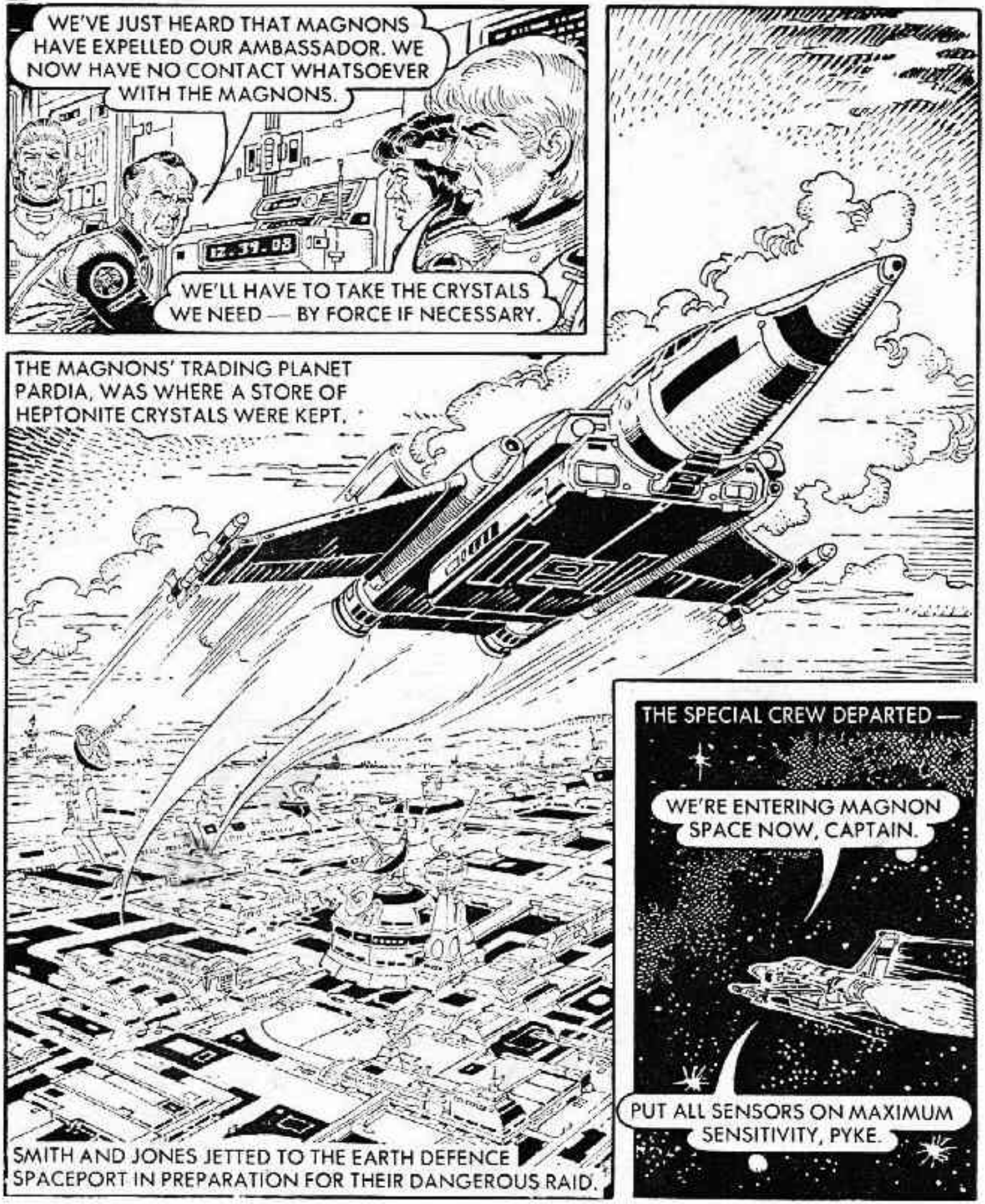
THEY THINK WE'RE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF THEIR HOSPITAL SHIP. LET'S GET OUT OF HERE.


THEY FLED THE ANGRY MAGNON ONSLAUGHT.
S.P.0


THEY REACHED EARTH AFTER A LONG FLIGHT —
. . . AND WE HAVE THE CO-ORDINATES OF THE FORCE WAVE. THE SITUATION IS EXTREMELY SERIOUS.

YOU CAN SEE THAT THE FORCE WAVE IS ON COURSE FOR MAGNIA AND OUR OWN SOLAR SYSTEM. UNLESS WE CAN STOP THE WAVE WE WILL ALL BE DESTROYED.

ONLY A HEPTONITE MATRIX COULD STOP THAT KIND OF FORCE.
BUT ONLY THE MAGNONS HAVE ENOUGH HEPTONITE CRYSTALS TO GENERATE A MATRIX OF THE SIZE NEEDED, AND THEY ARE NOT LIKELY TO GIVE THEM TO US NOW.
N ARMY


WE'VE JUST HEARD THAT MAGNONS HAVE EXPELLED OUR AMBASSADOR. WE NOW HAVE NO CONTACT WHATSOEVER WITH THE MAGNONS.
WE'LL HAVE TO TAKE THE CRYSTALS WE NEED — BY FORCE IF NECESSARY.
THE MAGNONS' TRADING PLANET PARDIA, WAS WHERE A STORE OF HEPTONITE CRYSTALS WERE KEPT.
SMITH AND JONES JETTED TO THE EARTH DEFENCE SPACEPORT IN PREPARATION FOR THEIR DANGEROUS RAID.
THE SPECIAL CREW DEPARTED —
WE'RE ENTERING MAGNON SPACE NOW, CAPTAIN.
PUT ALL SENSORS ON MAXIMUM SENSITIVITY, PYKE.

THIS IS CAPTAIN JAK SMITH OF THE EARTH DEFENCE FORCE. I AM ENTERING MAGNON SPACE IN PEACE — MY CANNON ARE SEALED, AND MY SHIELDS DOWN.

SMITH'S MESSAGE WAS RECEIVED —
YOU ATTACKED AND DESTROYED OUR HOSPITAL SHIP. YOU WILL PAY FOR THAT.

THE MAGNON WOULDN'T LISTEN —
THIS IS URGENT, YOU ARE MAKING A GRAVE MISTAKE . . .

AKROL
YOUR PLANET IS IN MORTAL DANGER . . .

SHIELDS UP! WARP OUT. THEY'RE NOT GOING TO LISTEN TO YOU, CAPTAIN.
THEN WE MUST TAKE THE CRYSTALS BY FORCE.

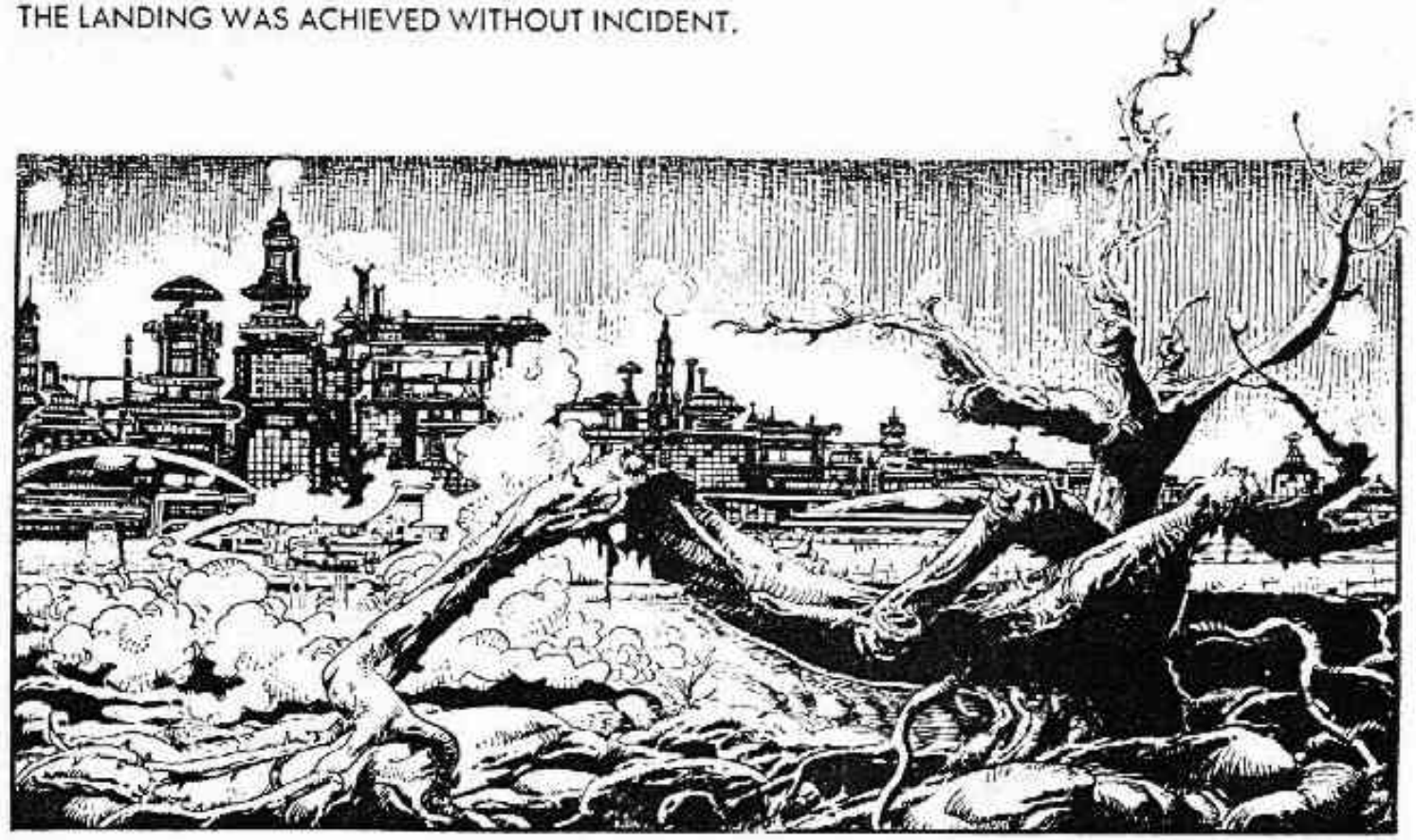
GIVE ME 0.001 SECONDS AT LIGHT SPEED . . . WE'LL OUTRUN PURSUIT.

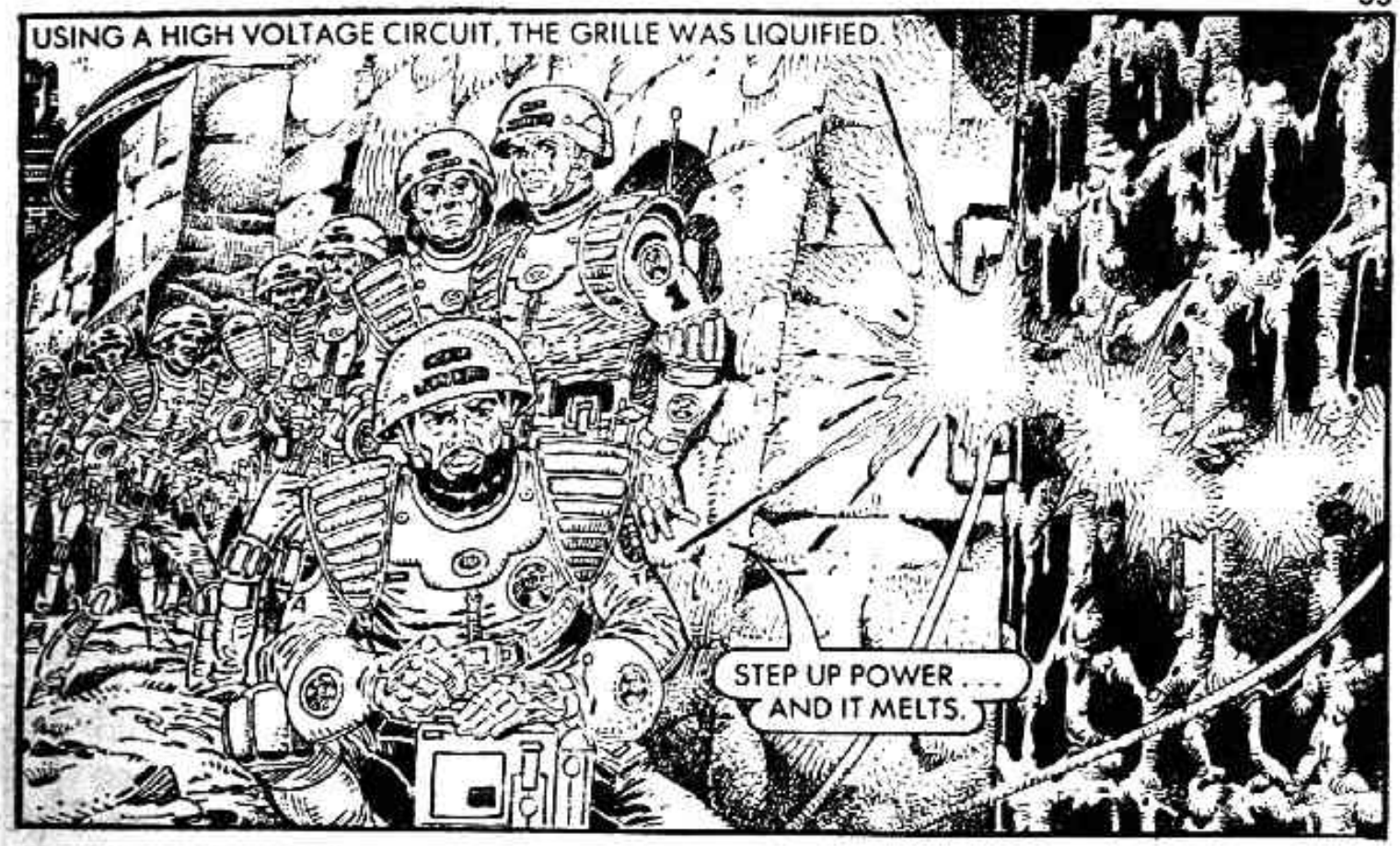
THE SUB-SPACE MOTORS FLARED BRIEFLY —
PREPARE TO CUT INTO NORMAL SPACE.
BUT A SURPRISE AWAITED THEM, BECAUSE THEIR BRIEF MOMENT AT WARP SPEED HAD ALLOWED A MAGNON WAR FLEET ENOUGH REAL TIME TO ASSEMBLE.
WE'VE RE-ENTERED RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF A MAGNON FLEET!
BORG
MAGNON

NO TIME FOR MESSING ABOUT, MAXIMUM VELOCITY.

A FULL SECOND AT WARP-SPEED TOOK THE CRAFT INTO ORBIT AROUND PARDIA —
ASTOR IS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PLANET.
WE'LL CREEP IN UNDER COVER OF OUR DEFLECTOR GRIDS.
PARDIA WAS A PLANET WITH ONLY ONE CITY — THE IMMENSE AUTOMATIC, SELF-SUPPORTING UNIT CALLED ASTOR.

THE LANDING WAS ACHIEVED WITHOUT INCIDENT.

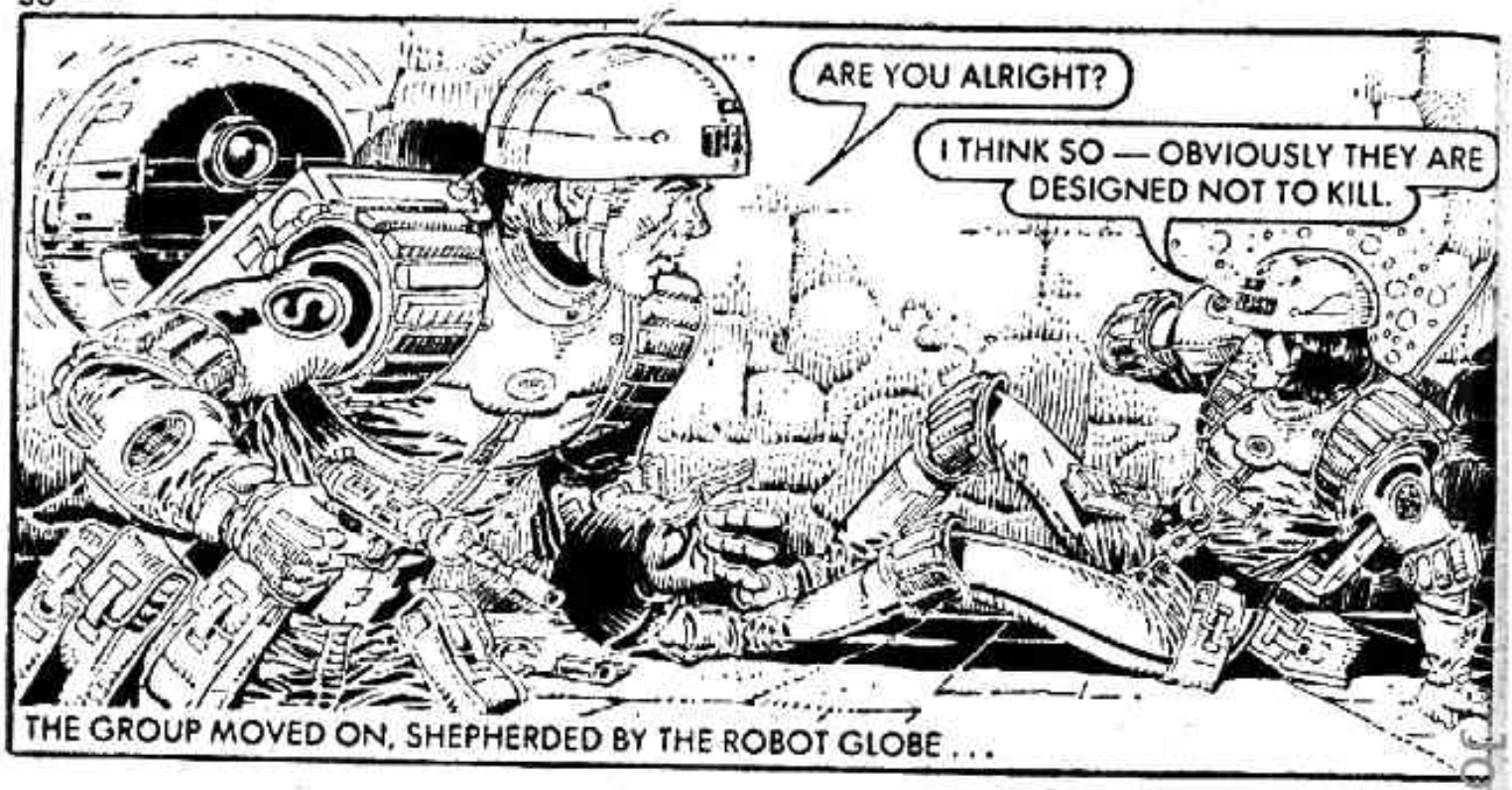


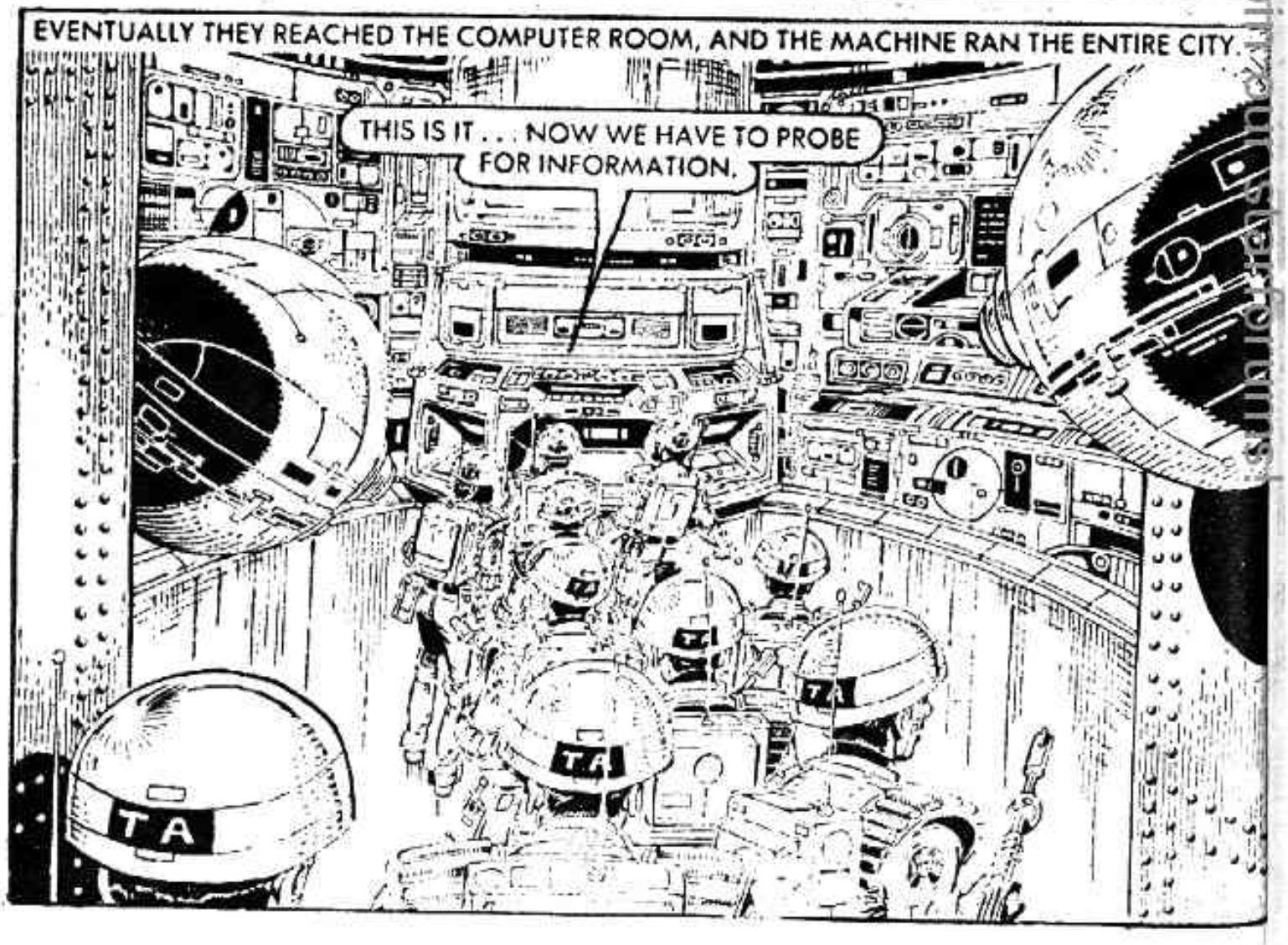

USING A HIGH VOLTAGE CIRCUIT, THE GRILLE WAS LIQUIFIED.
STEP UP POWER . . . AND IT MELTS.

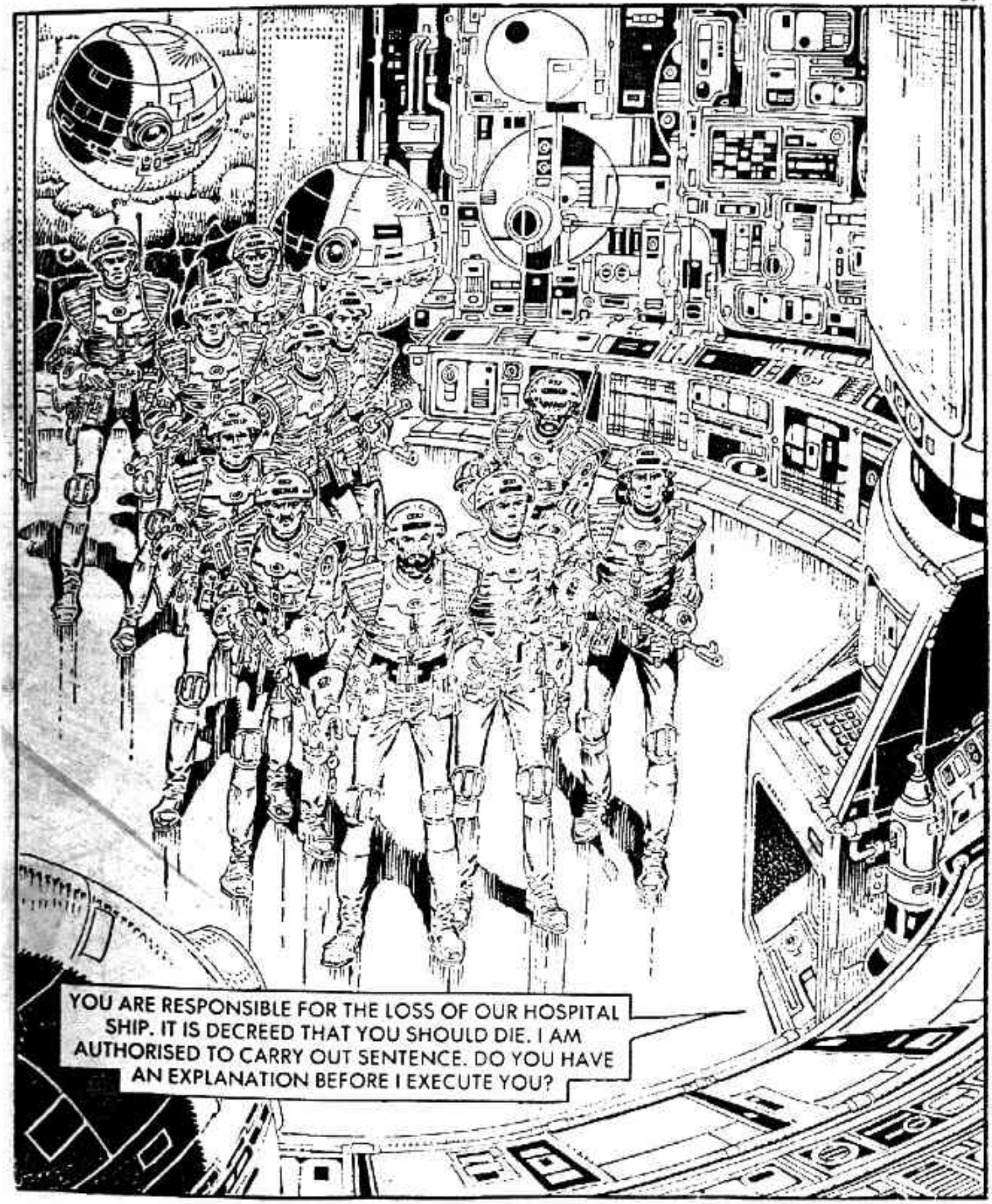
THEY ENTERED THE CITY —
THE STORES ARE THIS WAY.

THE EARTHMEN HAD NOT ESCAPED DETECTION . . .
. . . A DOOR RUMBLED CLOSED.
STOP IT!
IT'S NO GOOD! I CAN'T HOLD IT.
THEY WERE SEALED IN THE COMPLEX.

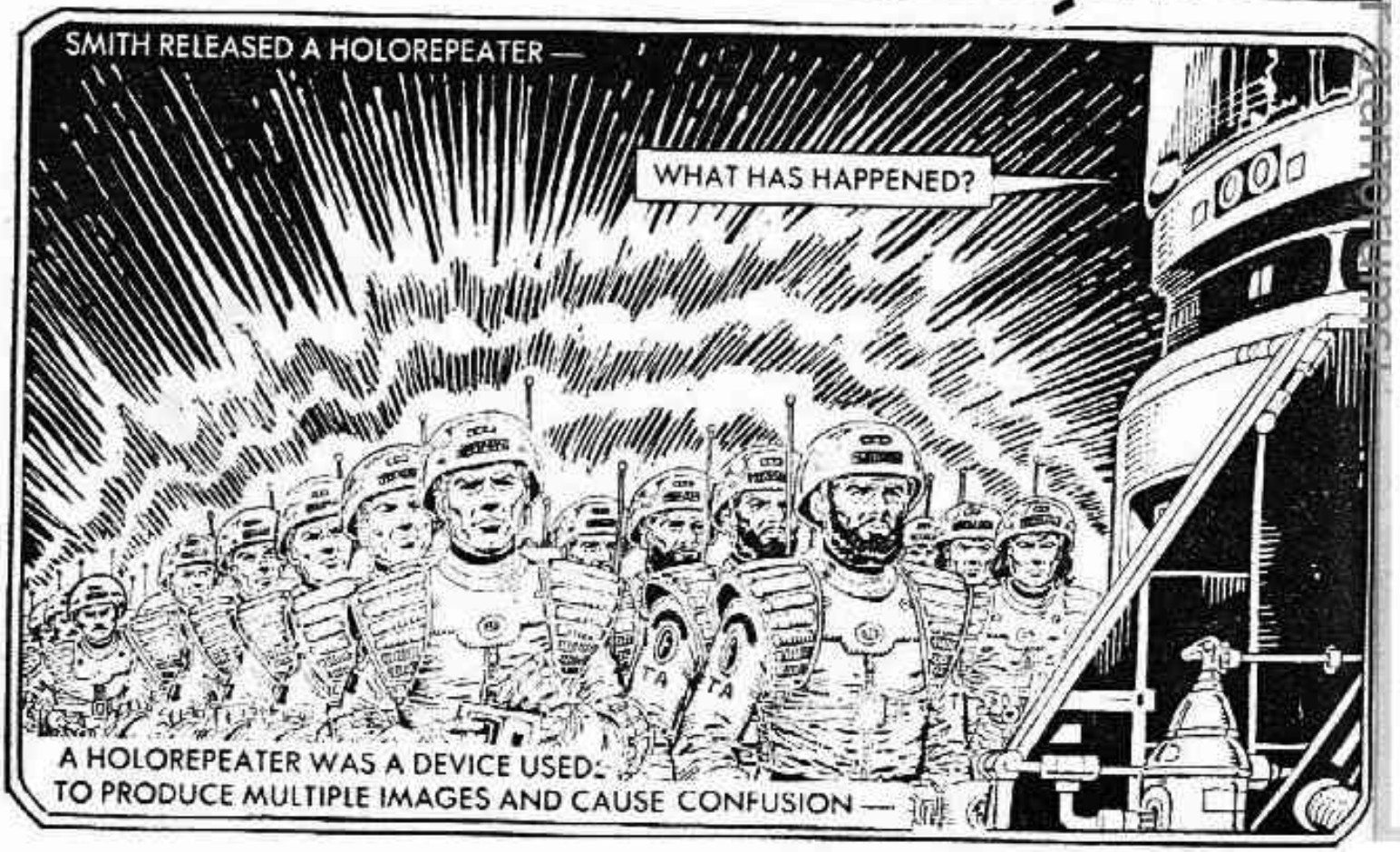
A SURVEILLANCE ROBOT . . . GET OUT OF THE WAY.
SURVEILLANCE ROBOTS PATROLLED THE SERVICE PASSAGEWAYS MONITORING CONSTANTLY.
THE ROBOT REACTED TO THE KICK —


ARE YOU ALRIGHT?
I THINK SO — OBVIOUSLY THEY ARE DESIGNED NOT TO KILL.
THE GROUP MOVED ON, SHEPHERDED BY THE ROBOT GLOBE . . .

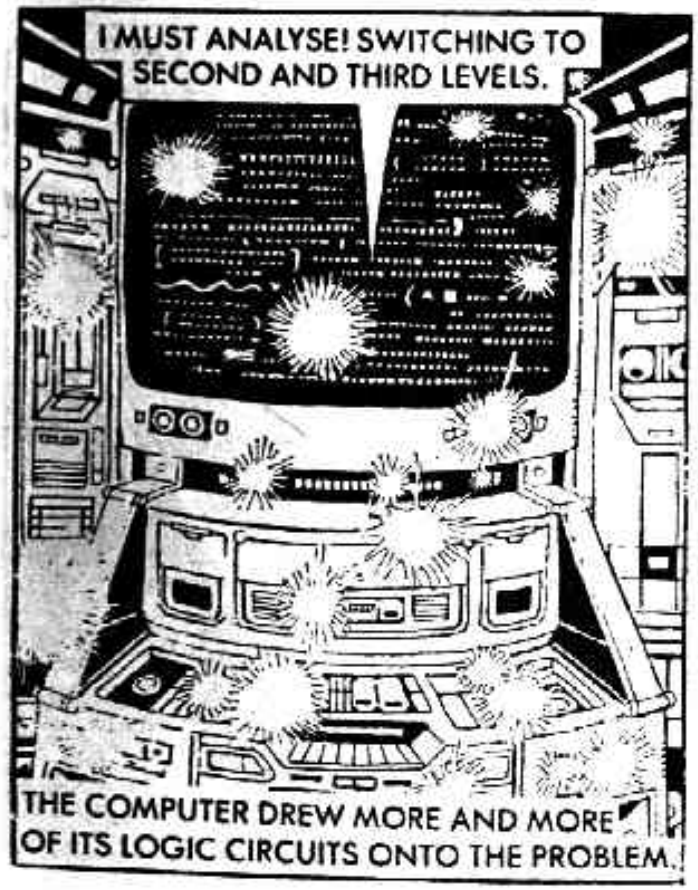

EVENTUALLY THEY REACHED THE COMPUTER ROOM, AND THE MACHINE RAN THE ENTIRE CITY.
THIS IS IT . . . NOW WE HAVE TO PROBE FOR INFORMATION.
TA


YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LOSS OF OUR HOSPITAL SHIP. IT IS DECREED THAT YOU SHOULD DIE. I AM AUTHORISED TO CARRY OUT SENTENCE. DO YOU HAVE AN EXPLANATION BEFORE I EXECUTE YOU?

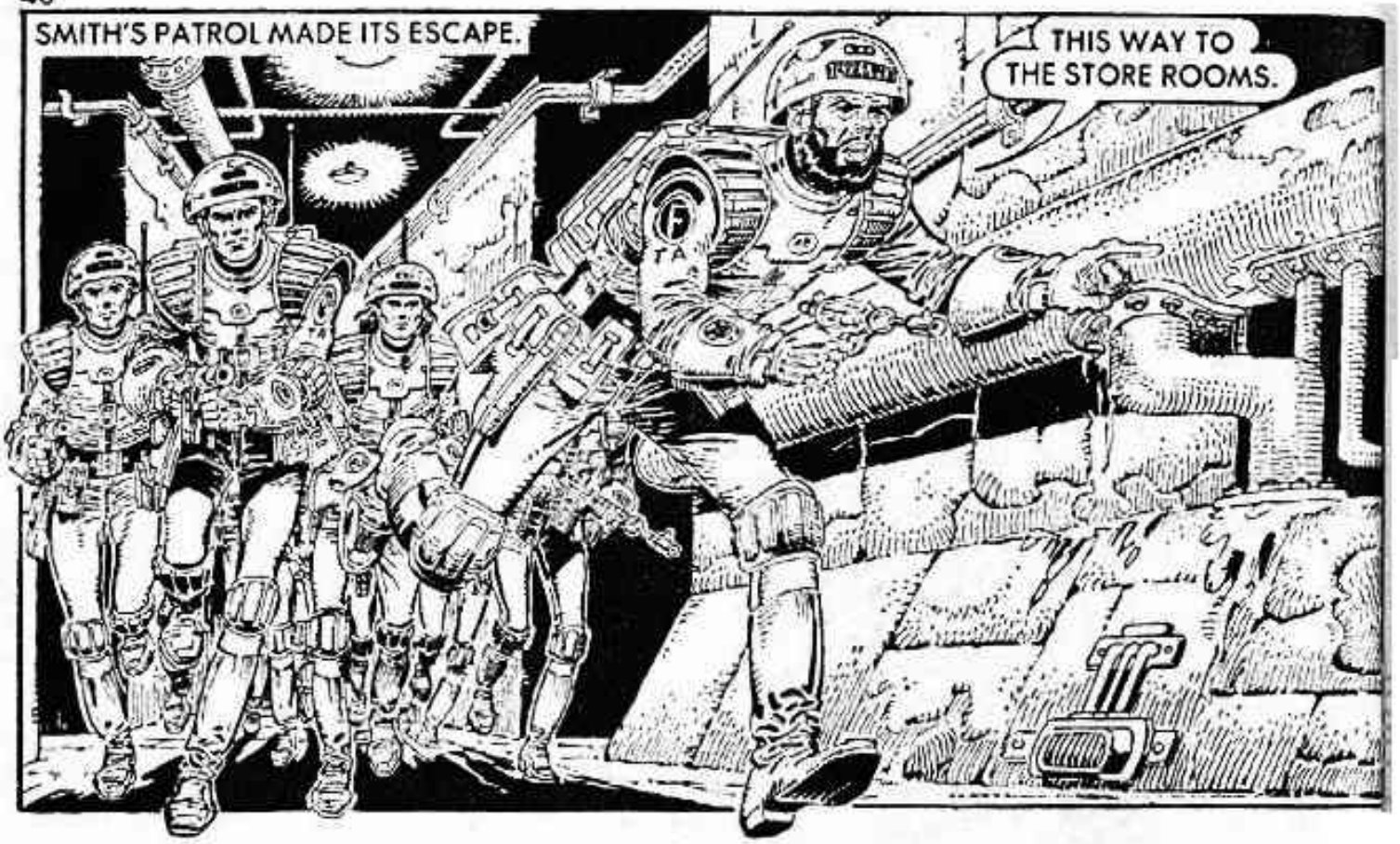
YOU LET US IN HERE. YOU KNEW. IF YOU KILL US, YOU WILL ALSO DIE. A WAVE OF . . .
NEGATIVE — NO WAVE WAS DETECTED.

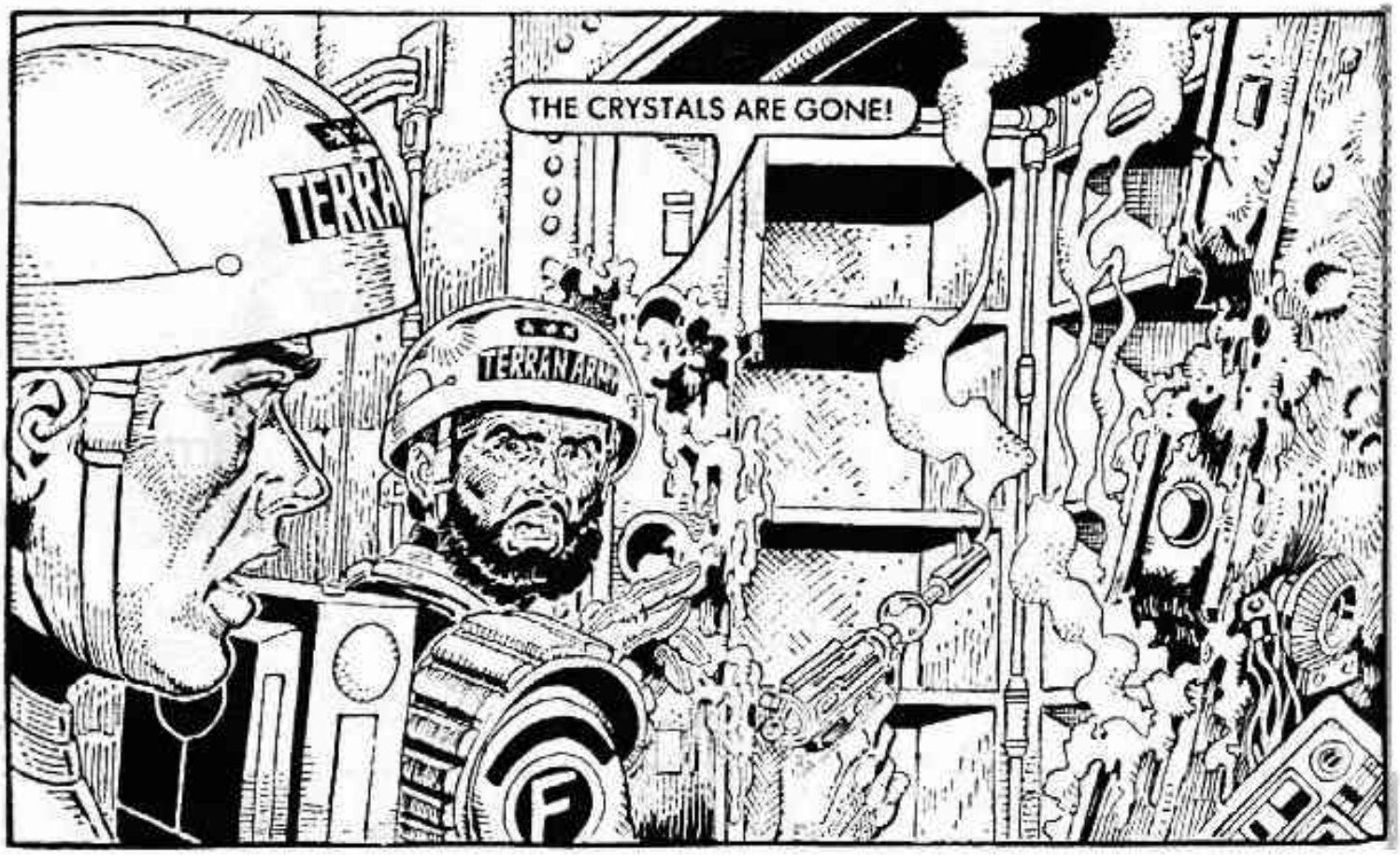

SMITH RELEASED A HOLOREPEATER —
WHAT HAS HAPPENED?
A HOLOREPEATER WAS A DEVICE USED:
TO PRODUCE MULTIPLE IMAGES AND CAUSE CONFUSION —

GET READY TO MOVE OUT.


I MUST ANALYSE! SWITCHING TO SECOND AND THIRD LEVELS.
THE COMPUTER DREW MORE AND MORE OF ITS LOGIC CIRCUITS ONTO THE PROBLEM.

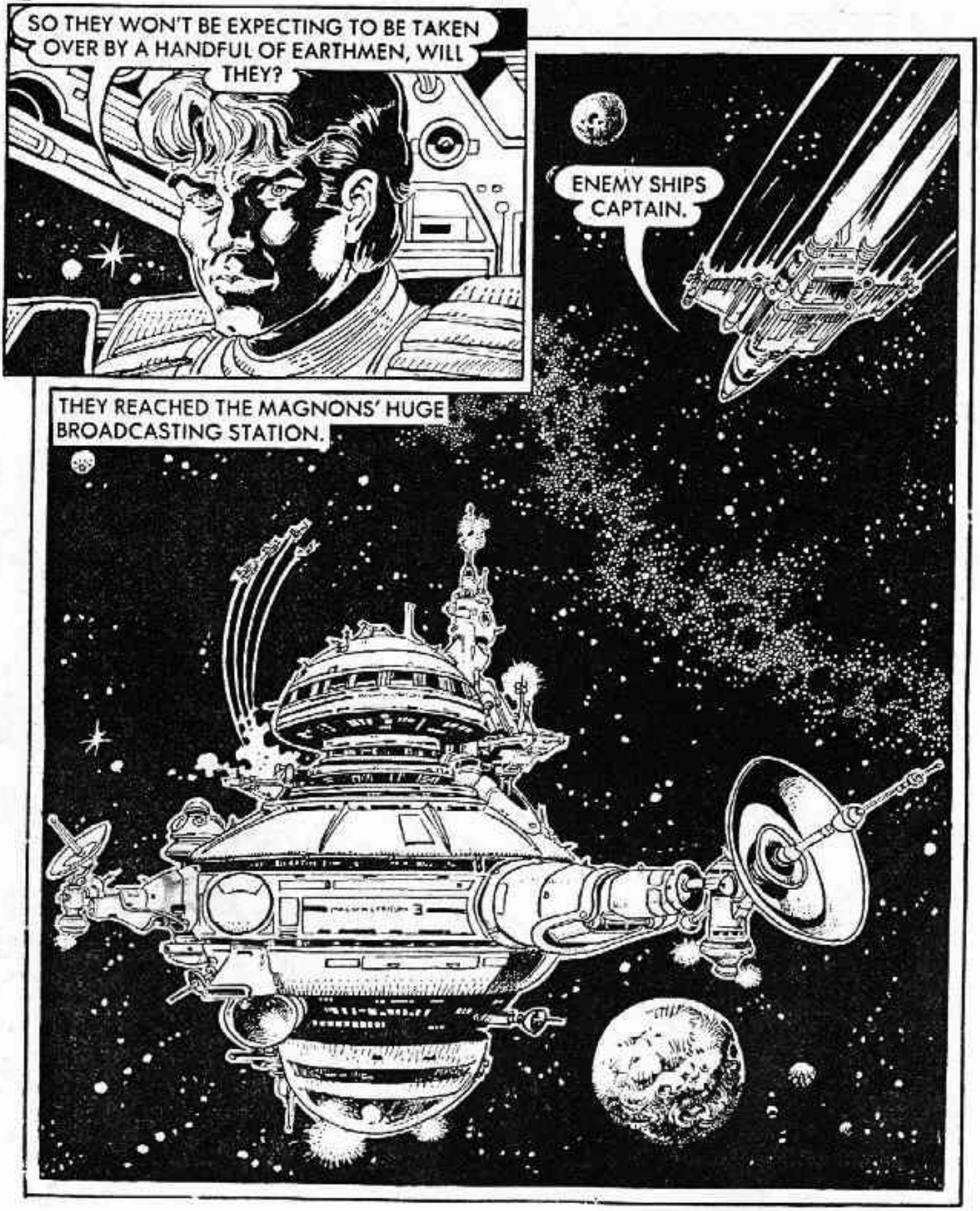
AS THE COMPUTER BROUGHT MORE CIRCUITS TO BEAR ON SOLVING THE PROBLEM, VITAL PARTS OF THE CITY'S FUNCTIONING WERE SWITCHED OFF.
NOW, MEN, EVERYBODY OUT WHILE THE COMPUTER TIES ITSELF IN KNOTS.


SMITH'S PATROL MADE ITS ESCAPE.
THIS WAY TO THE STORE ROOMS.


THE CRYSTALS ARE GONE!
TERRA
TERRAN ARMY

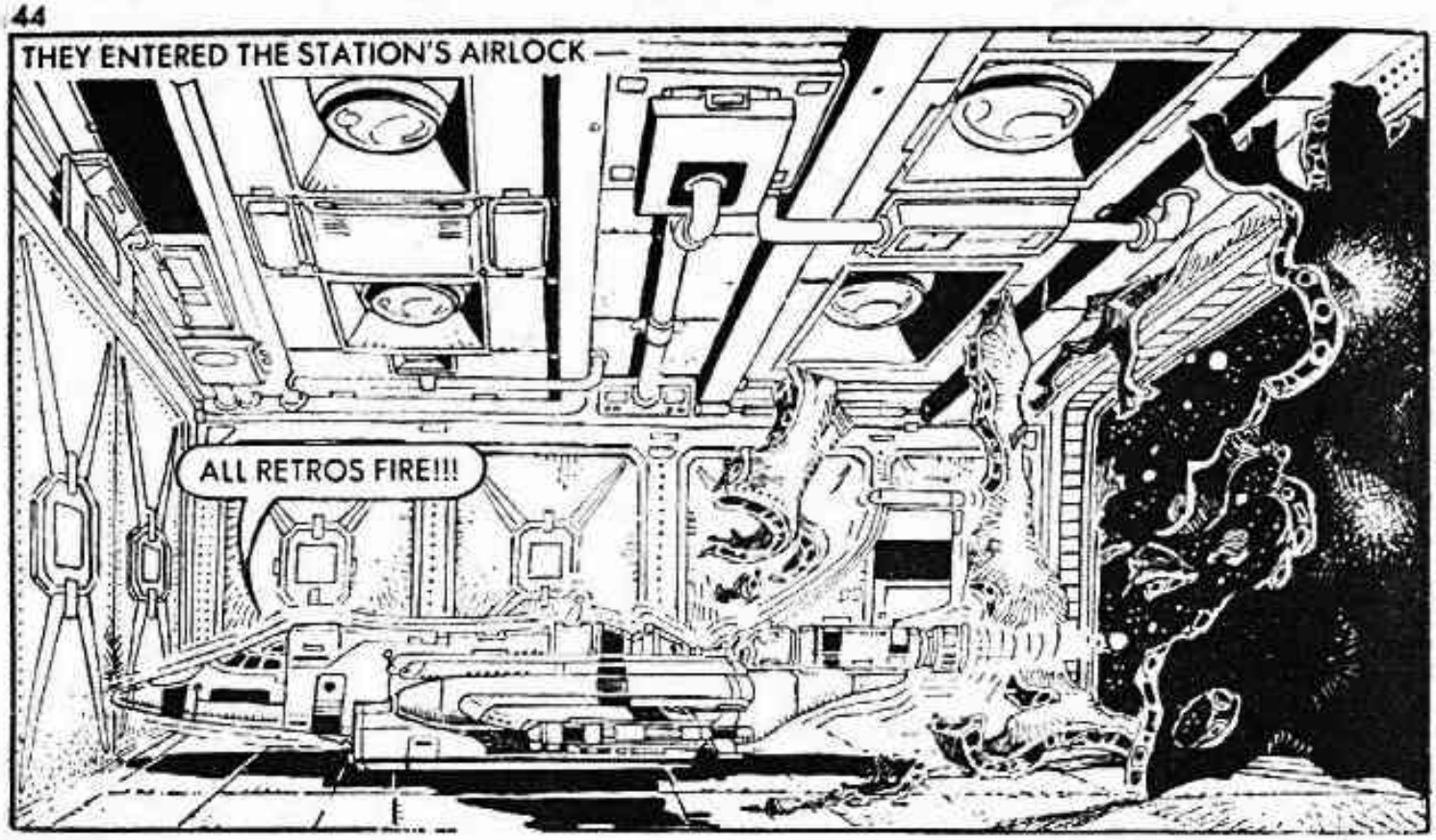
THE PATROL FOUGHT THEIR WAY OFF PARDIA.
WE MUST MAKE THE MAGNONS LISTEN TO US. I HAVE A PLAN. IT'S A DRASTIC ONE, BUT THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE. WE ARE GOING TO CAPTURE THEIR BROADCAST STATION IN THE REA SECTOR AND SEND THEM A MESSAGE THEY CAN'T IGNORE.

BUT THAT'S AS HEAVILY DEFENDED AS THE DREY'S PALACE!

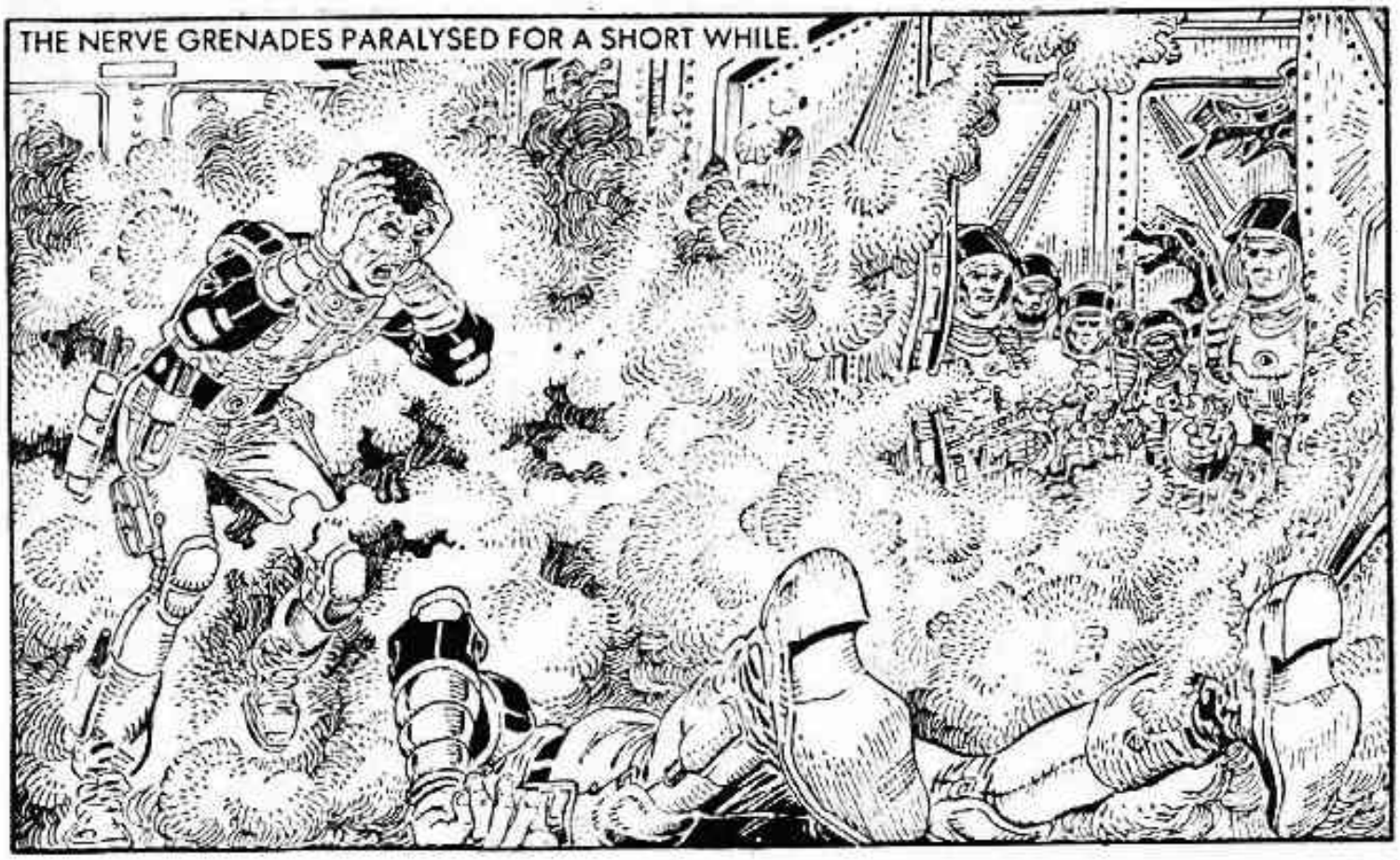

SO THEY WON'T BE EXPECTING TO BE TAKEN OVER BY A HANDFUL OF EARTHMEN, WILL THEY?
ENEMY SHIPS CAPTAIN.
THEY REACHED THE MAGNONS' HUGE BROADCASTING STATION.

SMITH TOOK DRASTIC ACTION —
ALL POWER — SUB LIGHT SPEED — NOW!!

THE CRAFT BLASTED STRAIGHT FOR THE DOCKING DOORS.
FIRE ALL RETROS 0.01 MILLISECONDS BEFORE IMPACT.

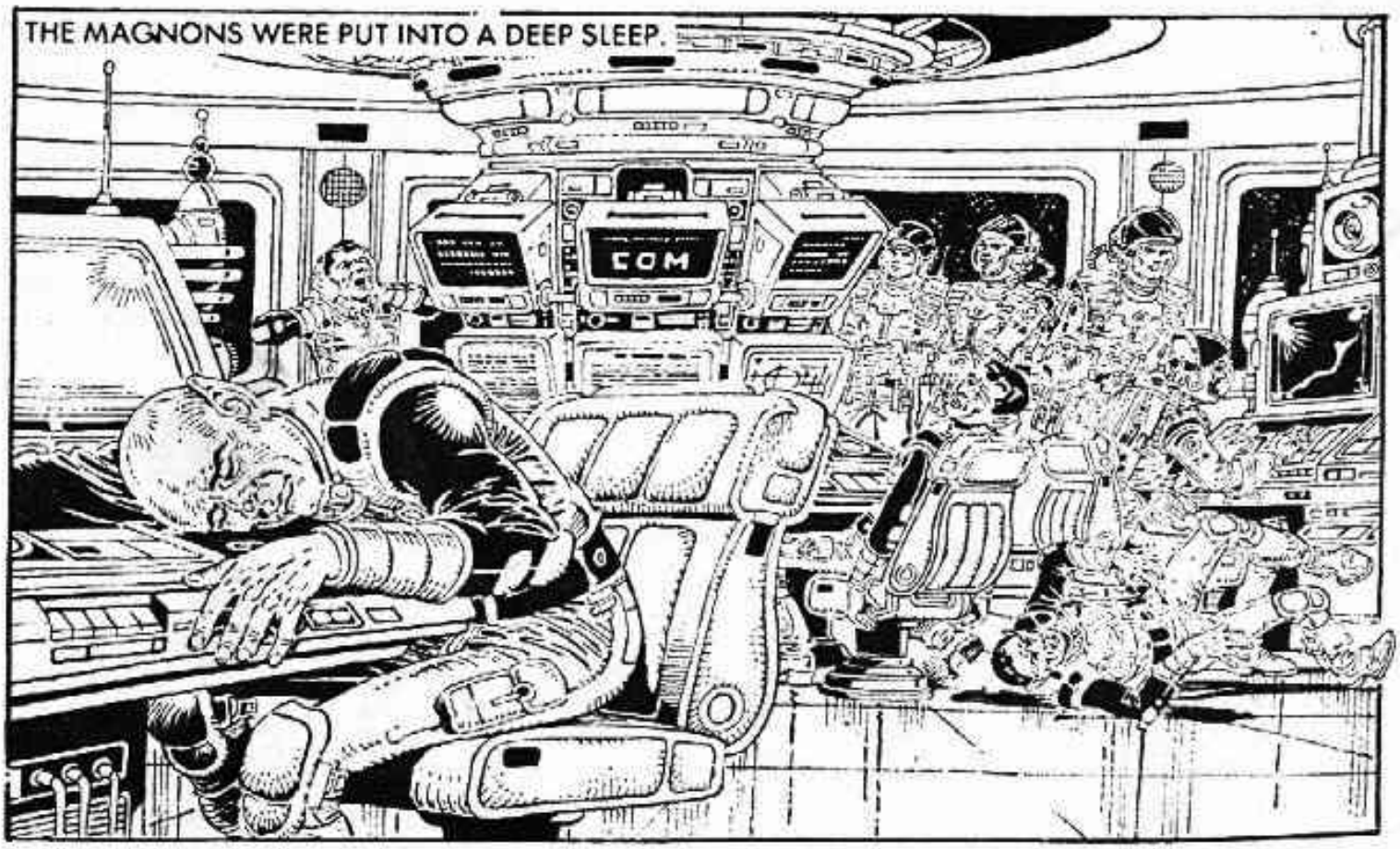

THEY ENTERED THE STATION'S AIRLOCK —
ALL RETROS FIRE!!!

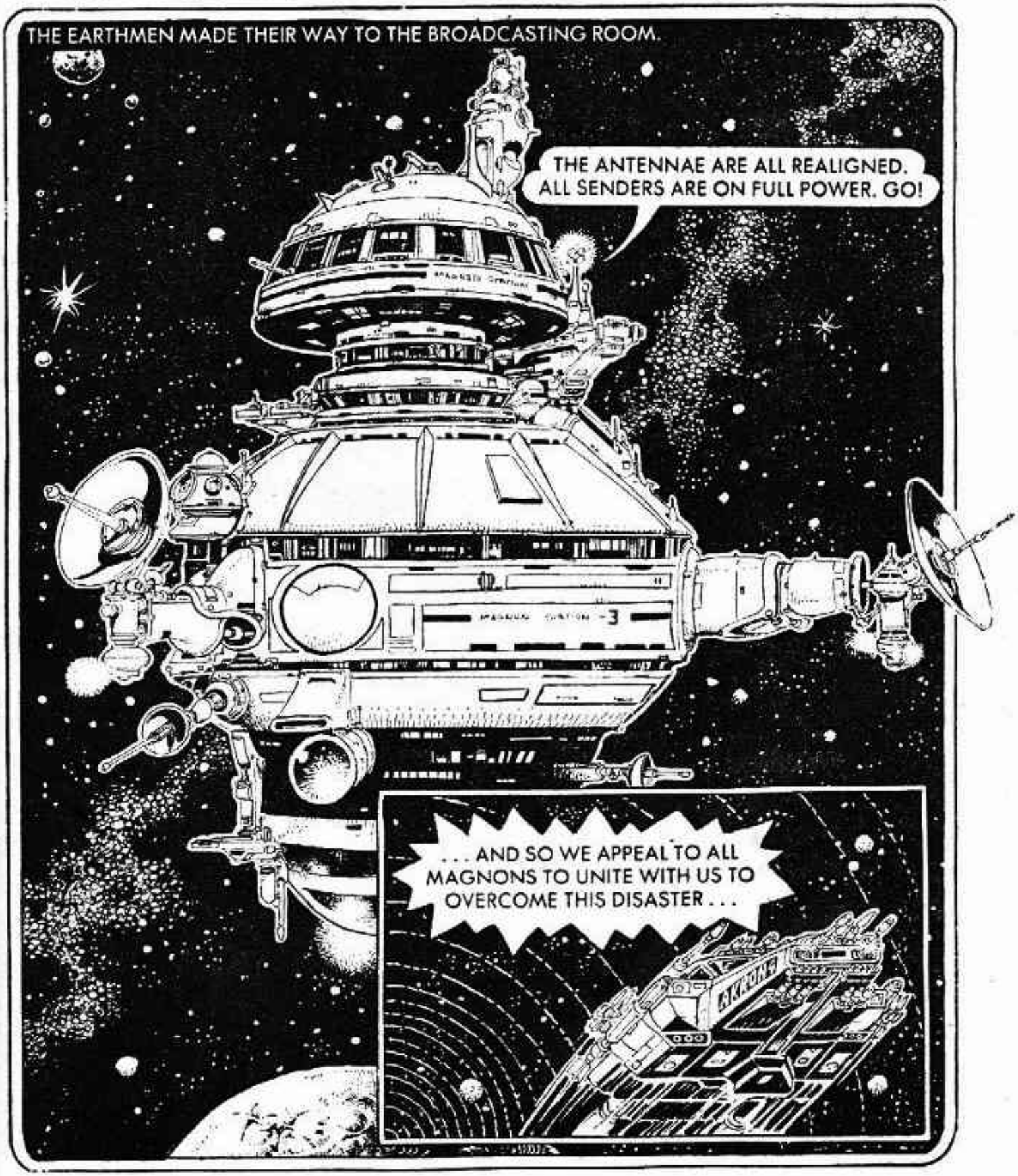
BATTERED, BUT INTACT THEY PREPARED FOR THE SECOND PHASE.
THESE NERVE GRENADES WILL TAKE CARE OF ANYONE ON THE OTHER SIDE.


THE NERVE GRENADES PARALYSED FOR A SHORT WHILE.

SET ALL WEAPONS TO STUN.

THE SUBSONIC TRANSMITTER WILL FIX THE MAGNONS FOR US. CUT OUT YOUR COMMUNICATIONS FOR THIRTY SECONDS, MEN.
THE DEVICE TRANSMITTED AN INAUDIBLE SOUND PATTERN THAT NEUTRALISED THE CONSCIOUSNESS CENTRES OF THE BRAIN . . .

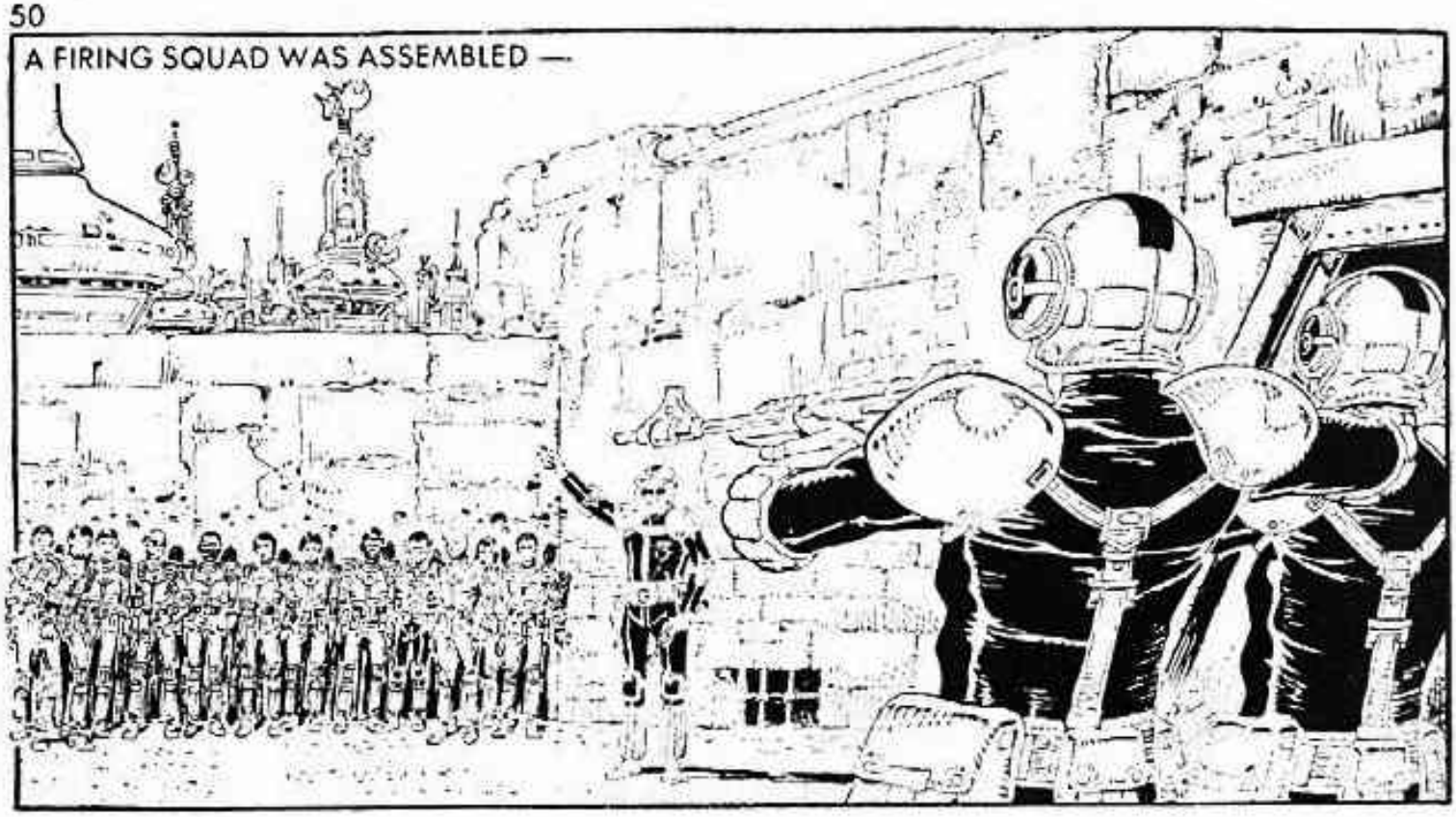

THE MAGNONS WERE PUT INTO A DEEP SLEEP.
COM

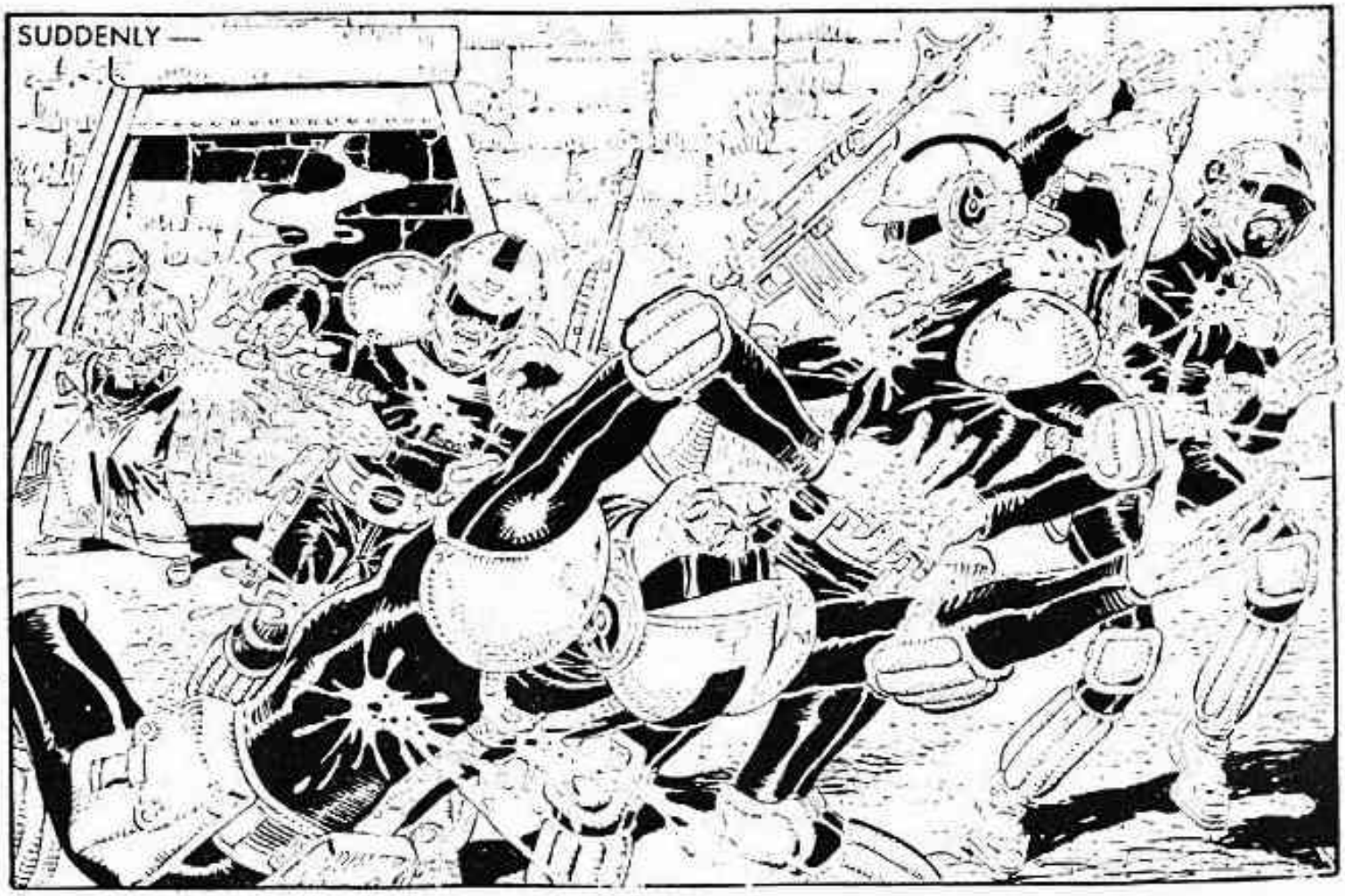

THE EARTHMEN MADE THEIR WAY TO THE BROADCASTING ROOM.
THE ANTENNAE ARE ALL REALIGNED. ALL SENDERS ARE ON FULL POWER. GO!
. . . AND SO WE APPEAL TO ALL MAGNONS TO UNITE WITH US TO OVERCOME THIS DISASTER . . .

ONE HUNDRED UNITS DISTANT, AKRON 4 INTERCEPTED THE TRANSMISSION.
. . . WHICH IS ABOUT TO DESTROY BOTH OUR CIVILISATIONS.
YOU HAVE GONE GREAT LENGTHS TO AVOID KILLING ANY MAGNONS. I THINK YOU ARE TELLING THE TRUTH. THE DREYGUARD WILL ESCORT YOU TO MAGNIA WHERE YOU CAN STATE YOUR CASE TO THE DREY UNDER MY PROTECTION.

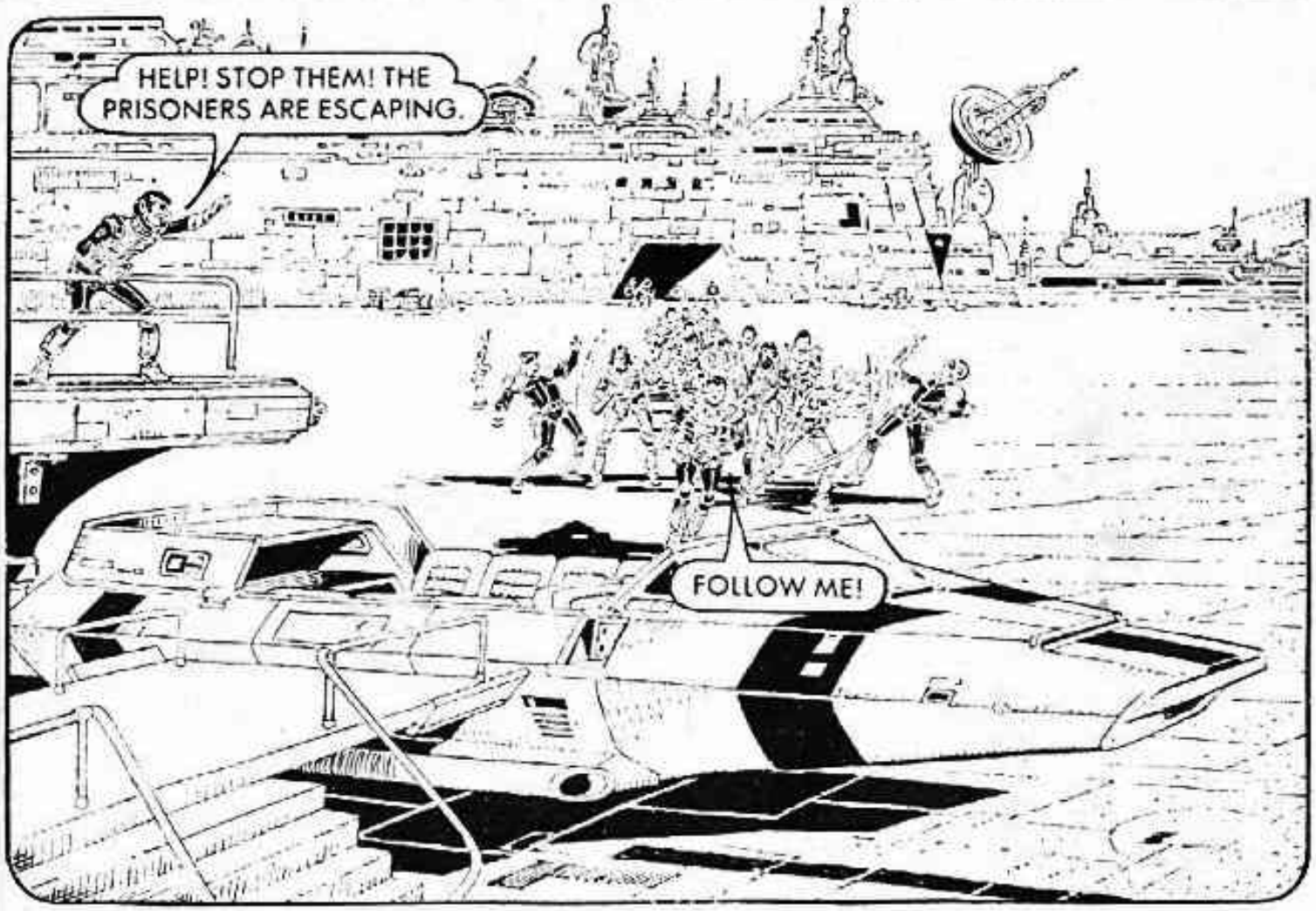
AKRON 4 LED SMITH TO MAGNIA.
TOUCHDOWN, CAPTAIN.
URAM 6

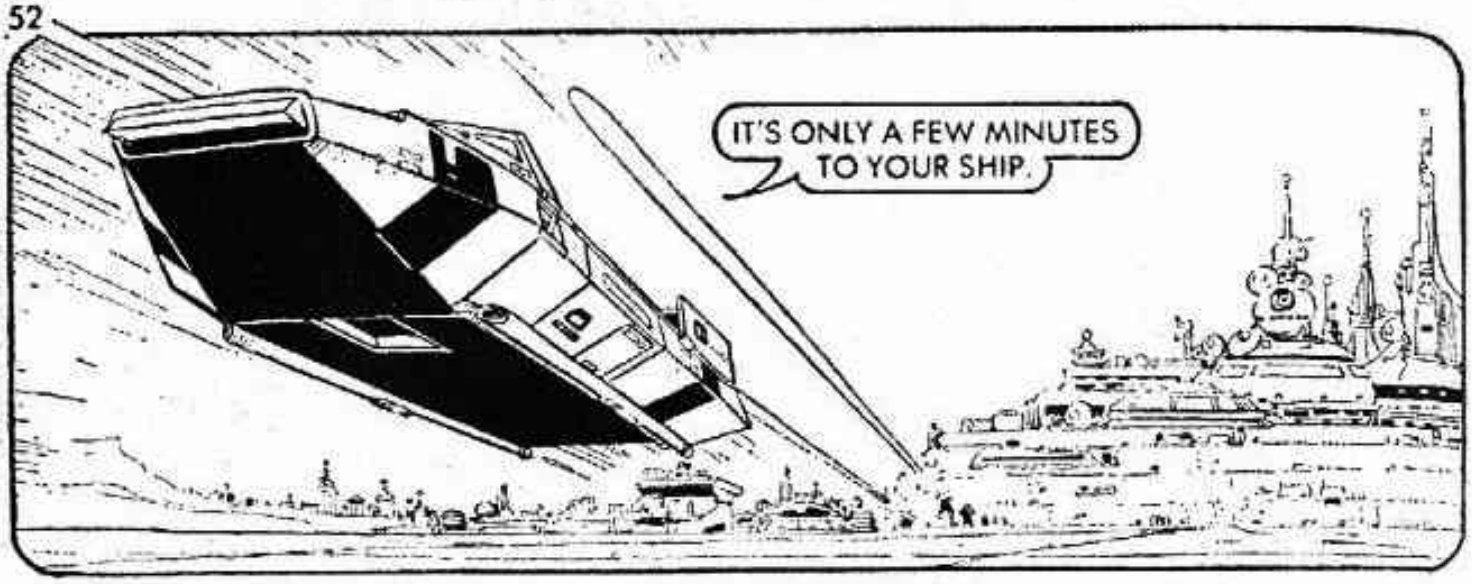
SMITH REPEATED HIS STORY TO THE DREY AND HIS COUNCIL.
LIES! DO YOU THINK WE ARE SO STUPID THAT WE WILL GIVE YOU OUR CRYSTALS TO USE AGAINST US? AND YOU, AKRON 4, ONCE TRUSTED BY ME, YOU ARE A TRAITOR! YOU WILL DIE FOR YOUR TREASON. TAKE THEM AWAY AND DISPOSE OF THEM!
THAT MADMAN WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATHS OF BILLIONS OF PEOPLE.
I BELIEVE YOUR STORY — BUT WE ARE TOO LATE.
R F
S
1


A FIRING SQUAD WAS ASSEMBLED —

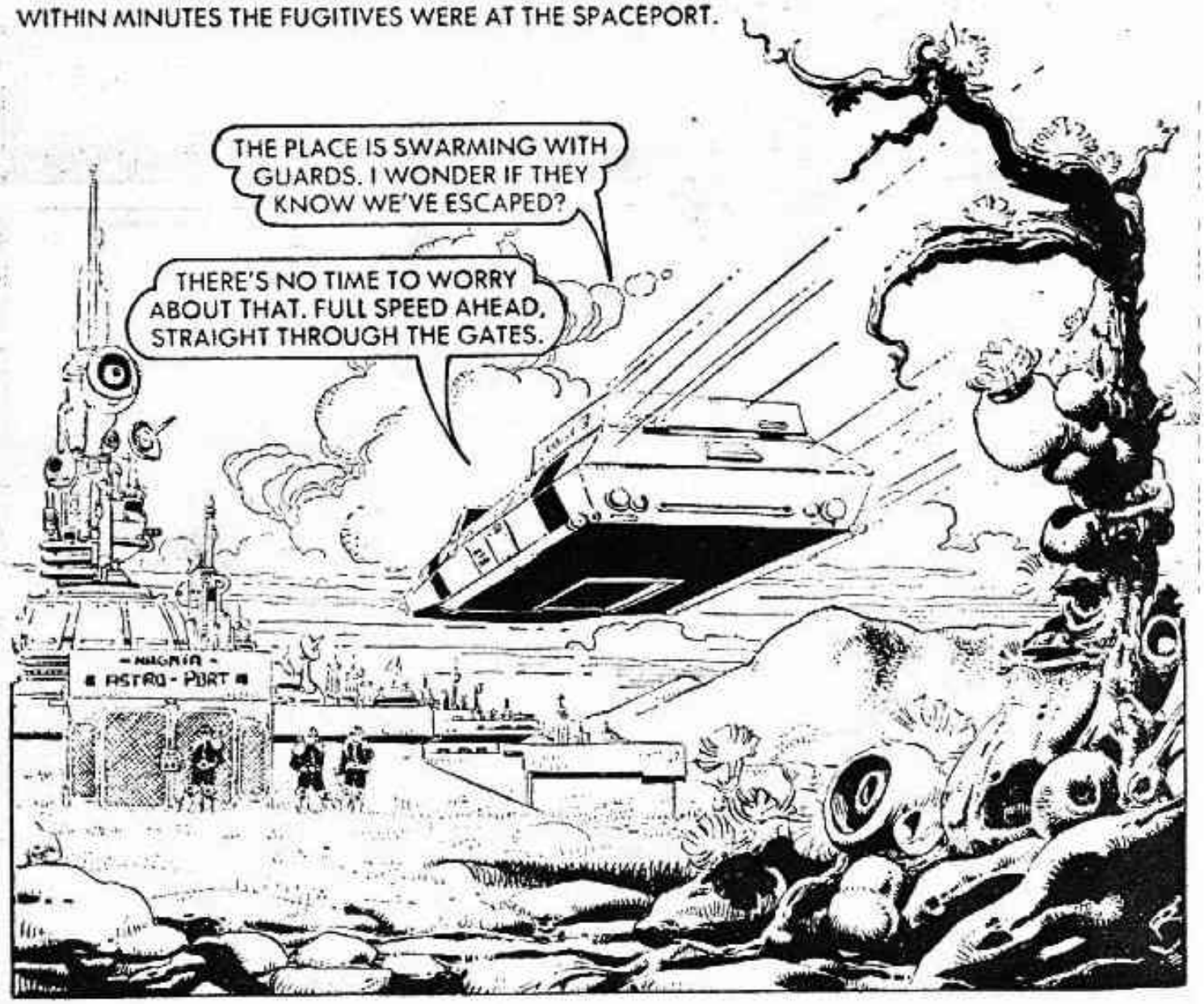

SUDDENLY —

HURRY . . . THE DREY IS MAD! YOU MUST STOP THIS WAVE OF TERROR. THIS . . . ARGHH!!


HELP! STOP THEM! THE PRISONERS ARE ESCAPING.
FOLLOW ME!



WITHIN MINUTES THE FUGITIVES WERE AT THE SPACEPORT.

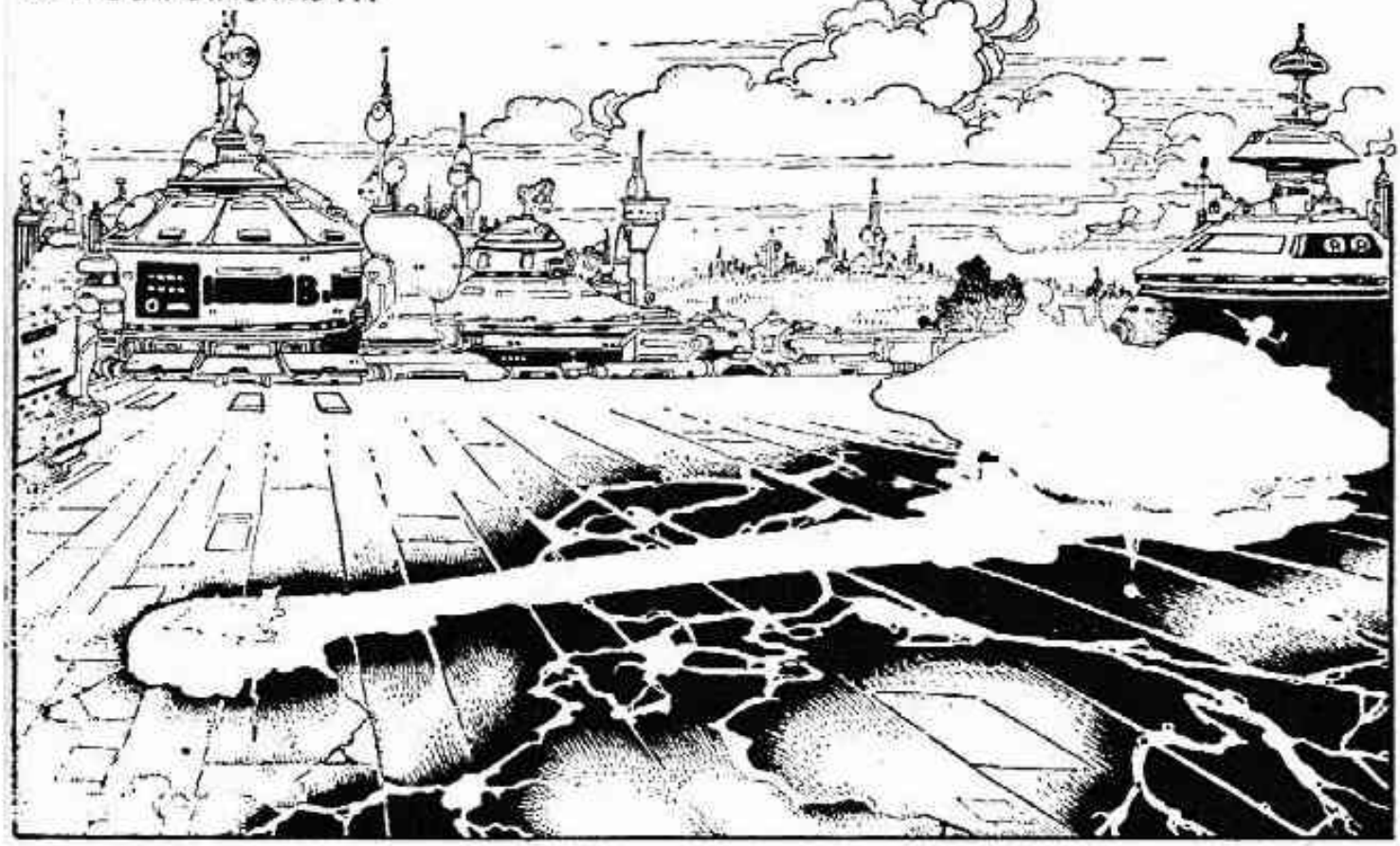


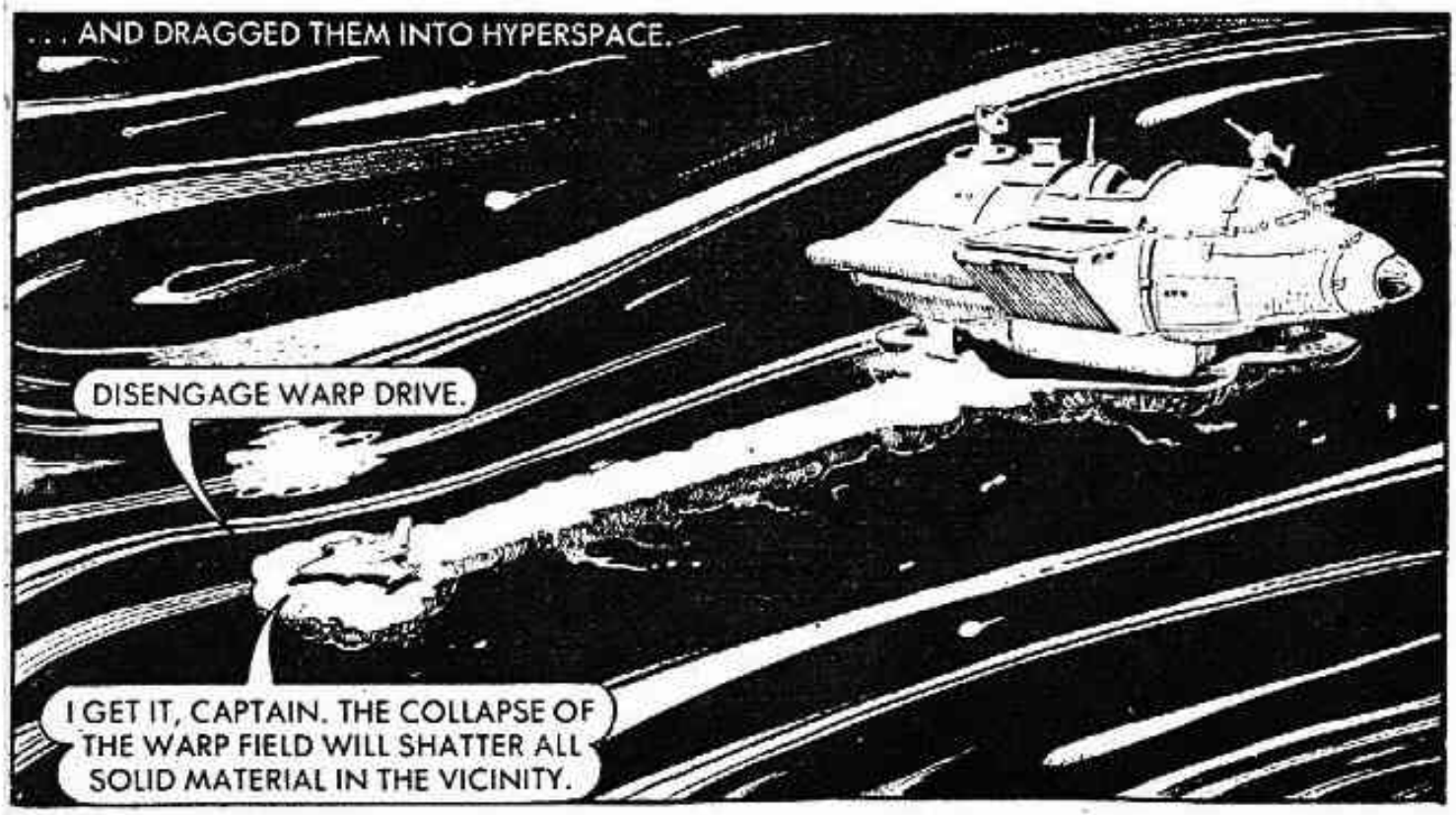
MAGNIA ASTRO-PORT
WE'RE THROUGH! HEAD FOR THE SHIP.
HURRY! THAT'S AN ALPHA CRUISER.

SURRENDER OR YOU WILL BE DESTROYED. THERE IS NO ESCAPE.
WE CANNOT RESIST THE ALPHA.
THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK!

ENGAGE WARP DRIVE!
WHAT????
THE WARP DRIVE FIELD HAD A SHATTERING EFFECT ON ANY NEARBY SOLID MATTER. IT WAS USUALLY ENGAGED ONLY IN DEEP SPACE.

THE WRENCH FIELD OF THE INCREDIBLE WARP DRIVE ACTED UPON THE CRUISER AND PART OF THE LANDING PAD . . .



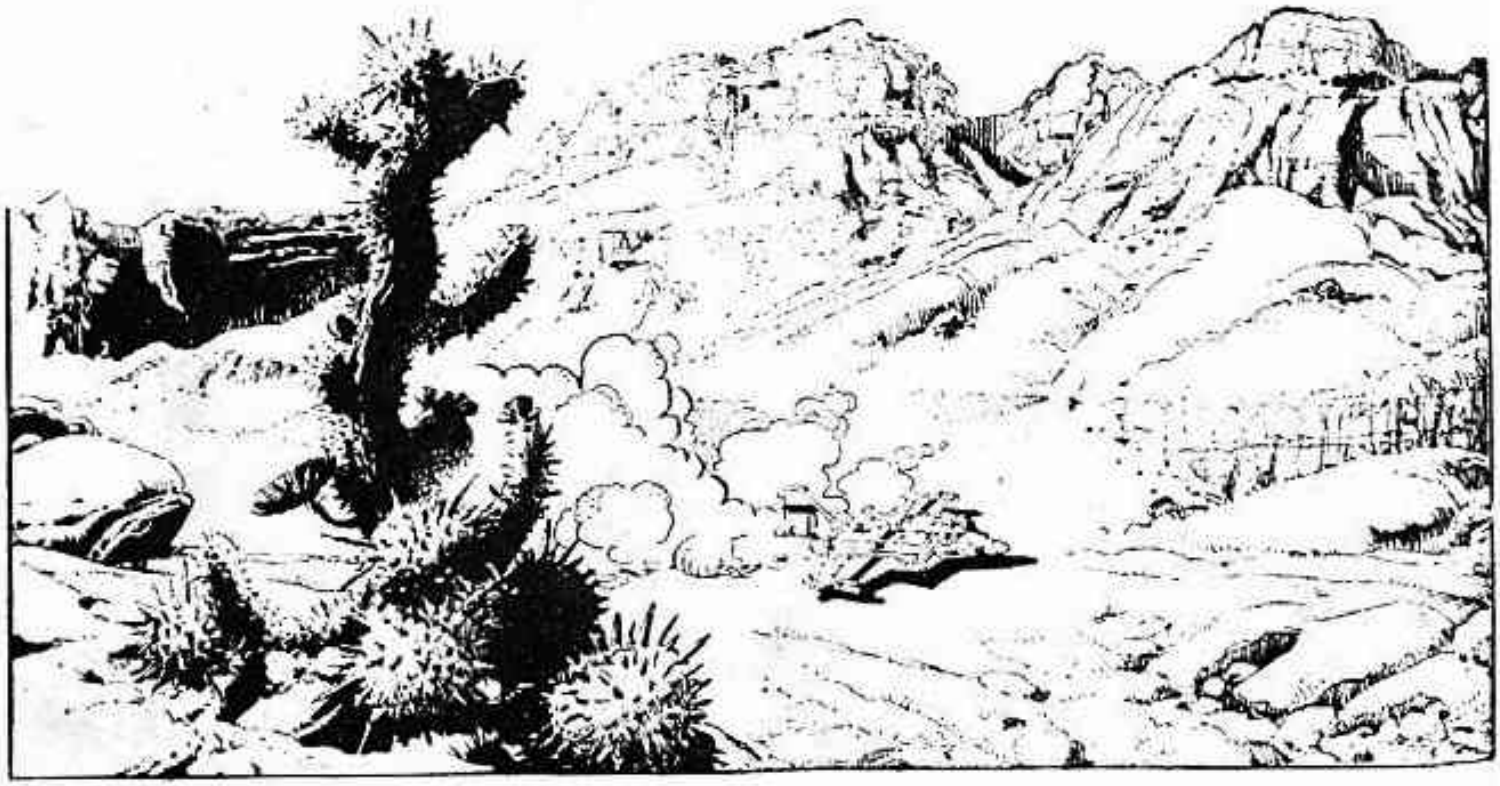


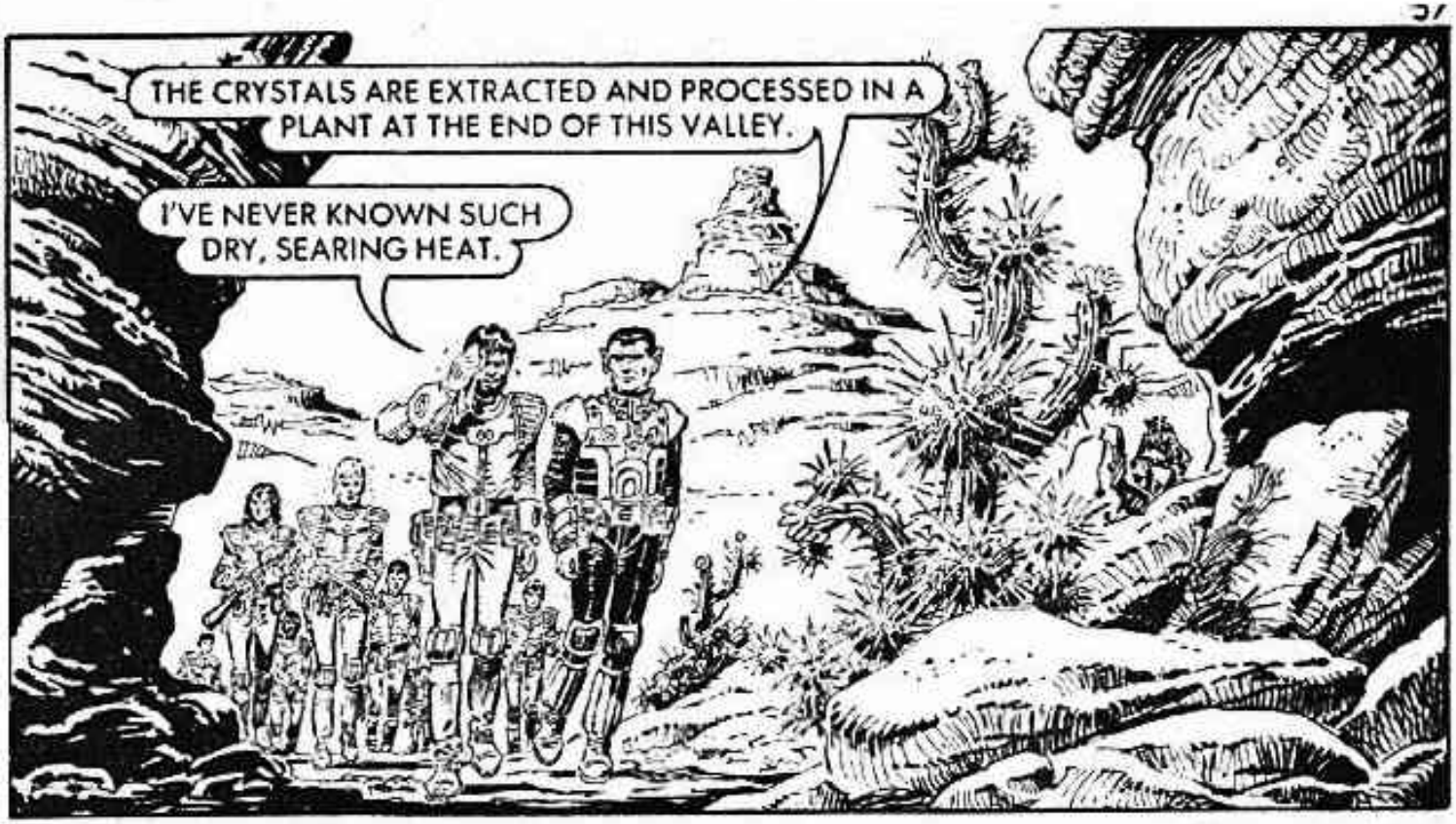
SMITH'S PLAN WORKED —

WE'VE ESCAPED, BUT WE'RE NO FURTHER FORWARD.

YES WE ARE. THERE IS A PLANET IN THE ELKAN SECTOR CALLED REPTOL. THAT IS WHERE THE HEPTONITE CRYSTALS COME FROM.

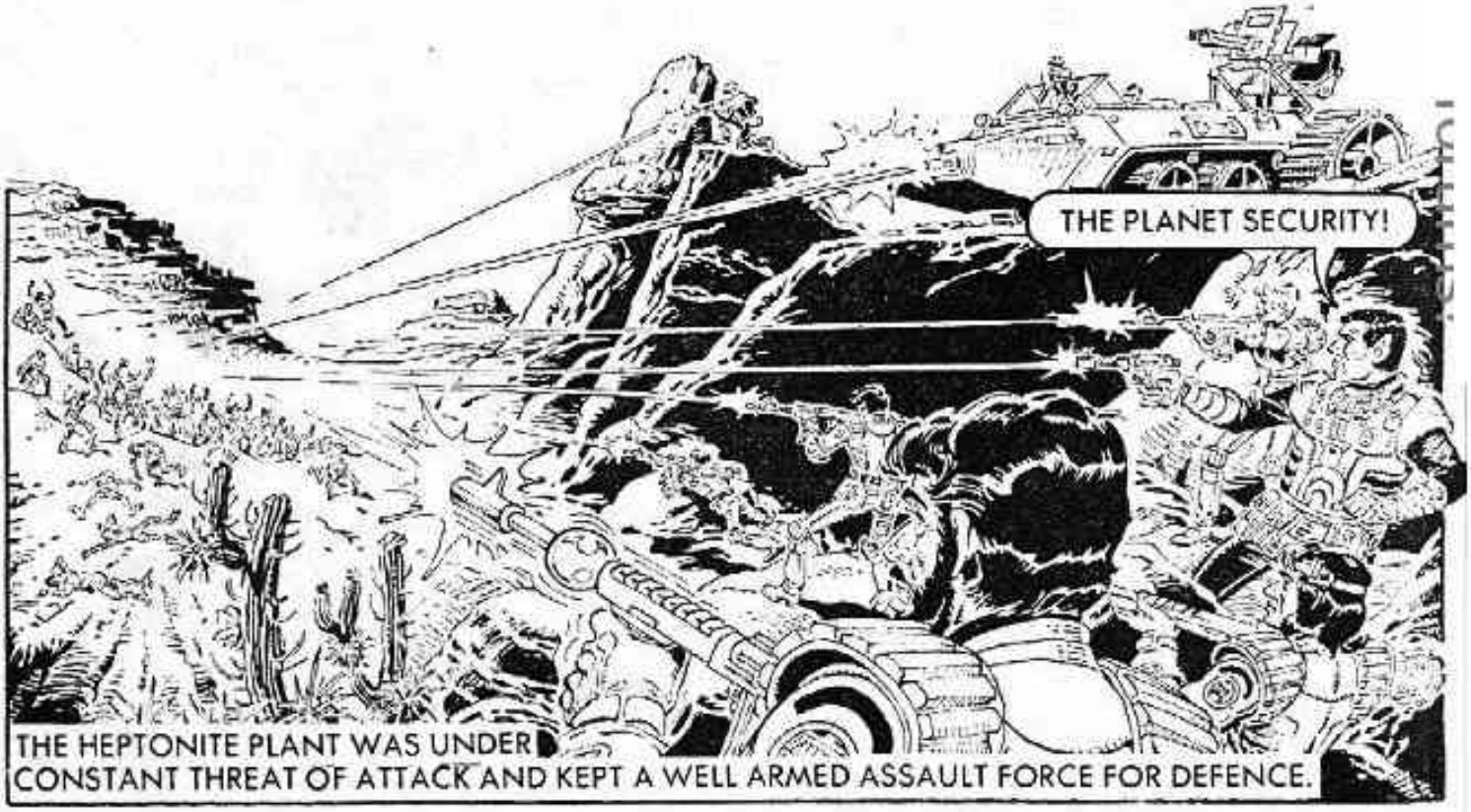
THEY LANDED ON THE DESOLATE PLANET.




THE CRYSTALS ARE EXTRACTED AND PROCESSED IN A PLANT AT THE END OF THIS VALLEY.
I'VE NEVER KNOWN SUCH DRY, SEARING HEAT.

SUDDENLY—
UURRAGHH!

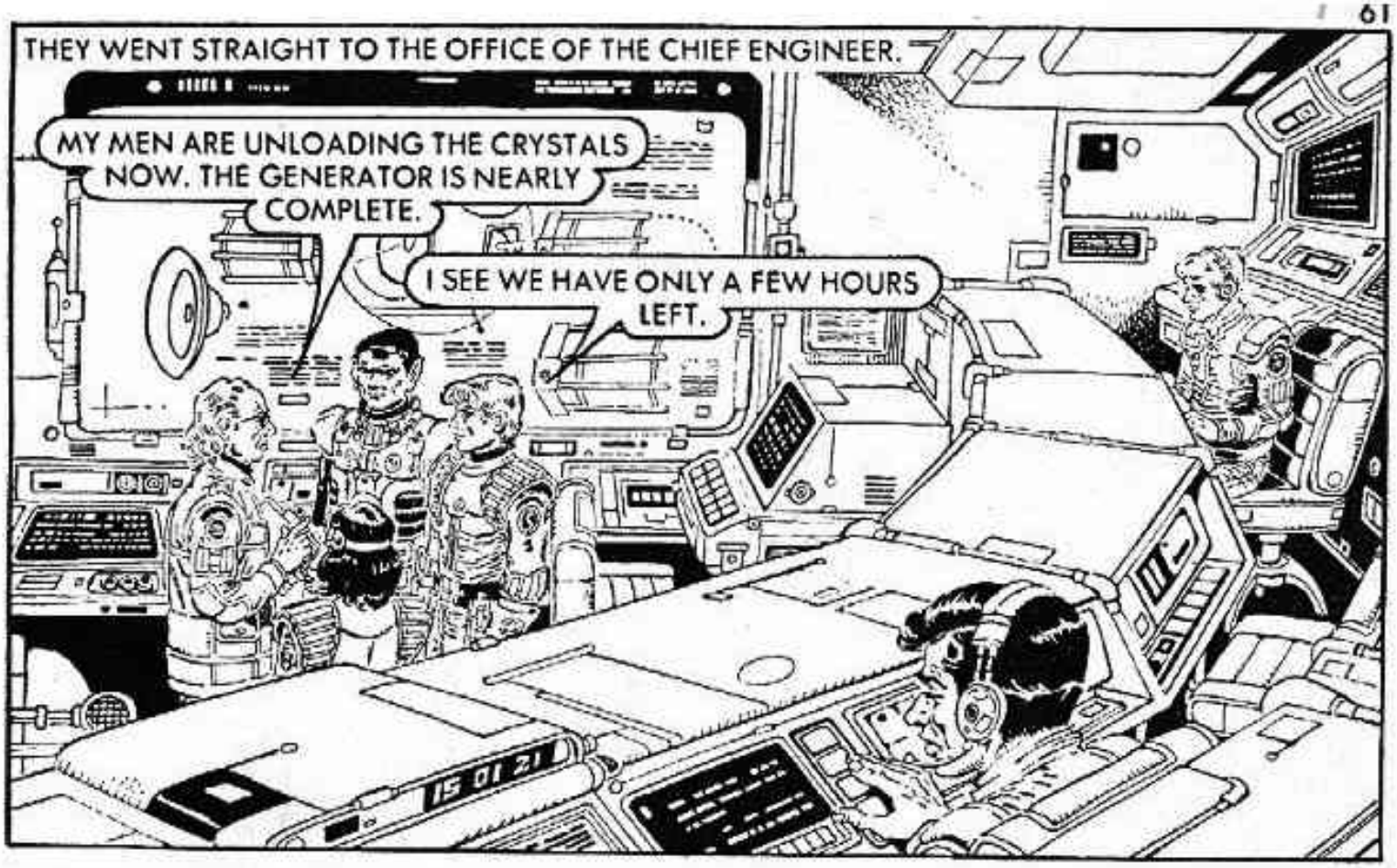
BUT UNEXPECTED HELP WAS AT HAND—



THE CARNIVOROUS REPTOL CREATURES WERE NO MATCH FOR THE MAGNON TROOPS.
NOW TELL ME WHAT YOU PEOPLE WANT HERE.
ON THE DREY'S ORDERS, WE MUST HAVE ALL THE HEPTONITE CRYSTALS AVAILABLE.
BASE
REPTOL
MAGNON
2

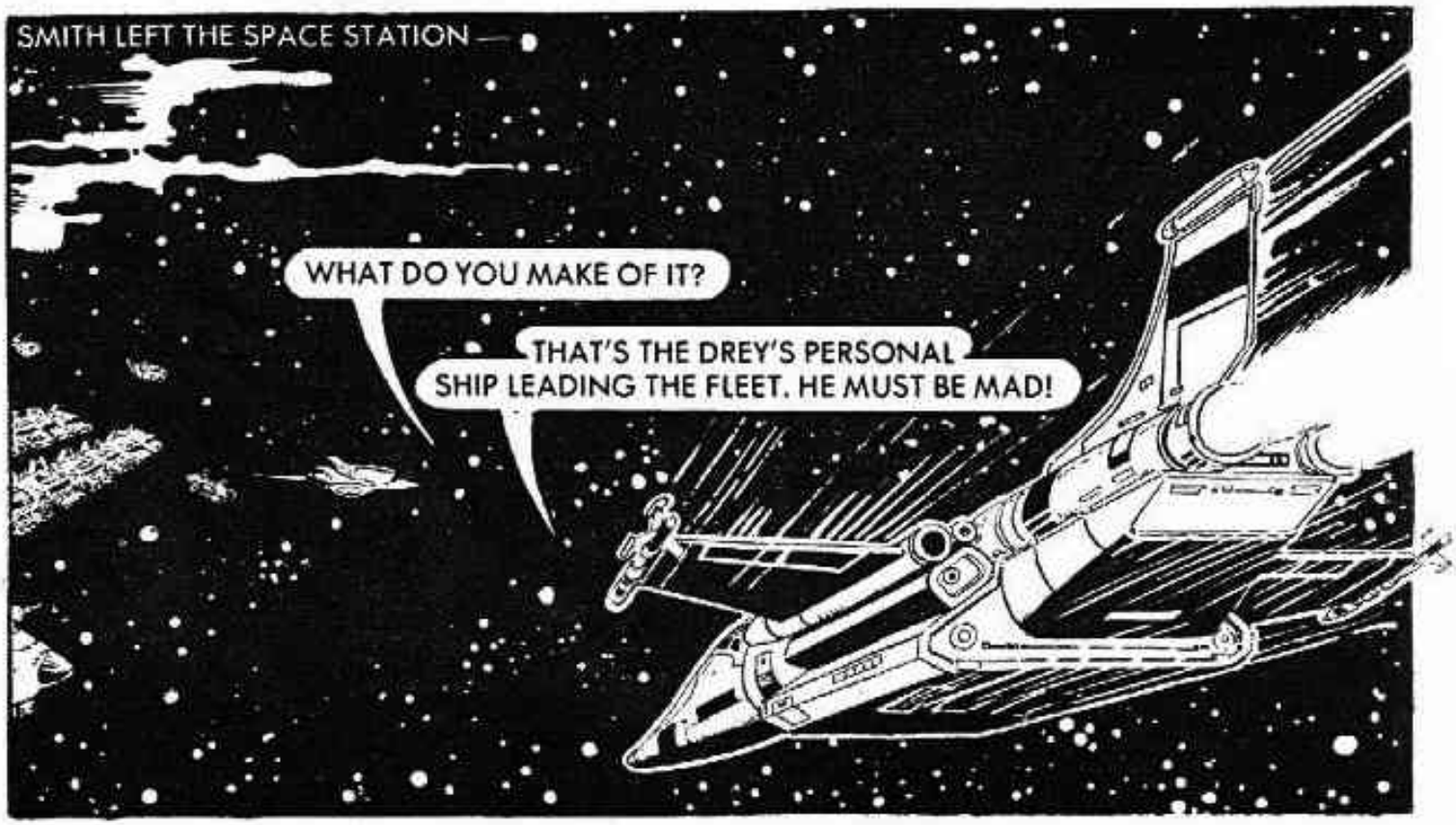
AKRON 4's RANK IMPRESSED THE GUARD —
THANKS FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION, BUT NOW WE MUST GO.
ONCE CLEAR OF REPTOL'S GRAVITATIONAL FIELD, SMITH ENGAGED THE WARP DRIVE AND SPED THROUGH HYPERSPACE.

SMITH EMERGED WHERE THE EARTH SCIENTISTS WERE CONSTRUCTING THE HEPTONITE MATRIX GENERATOR.

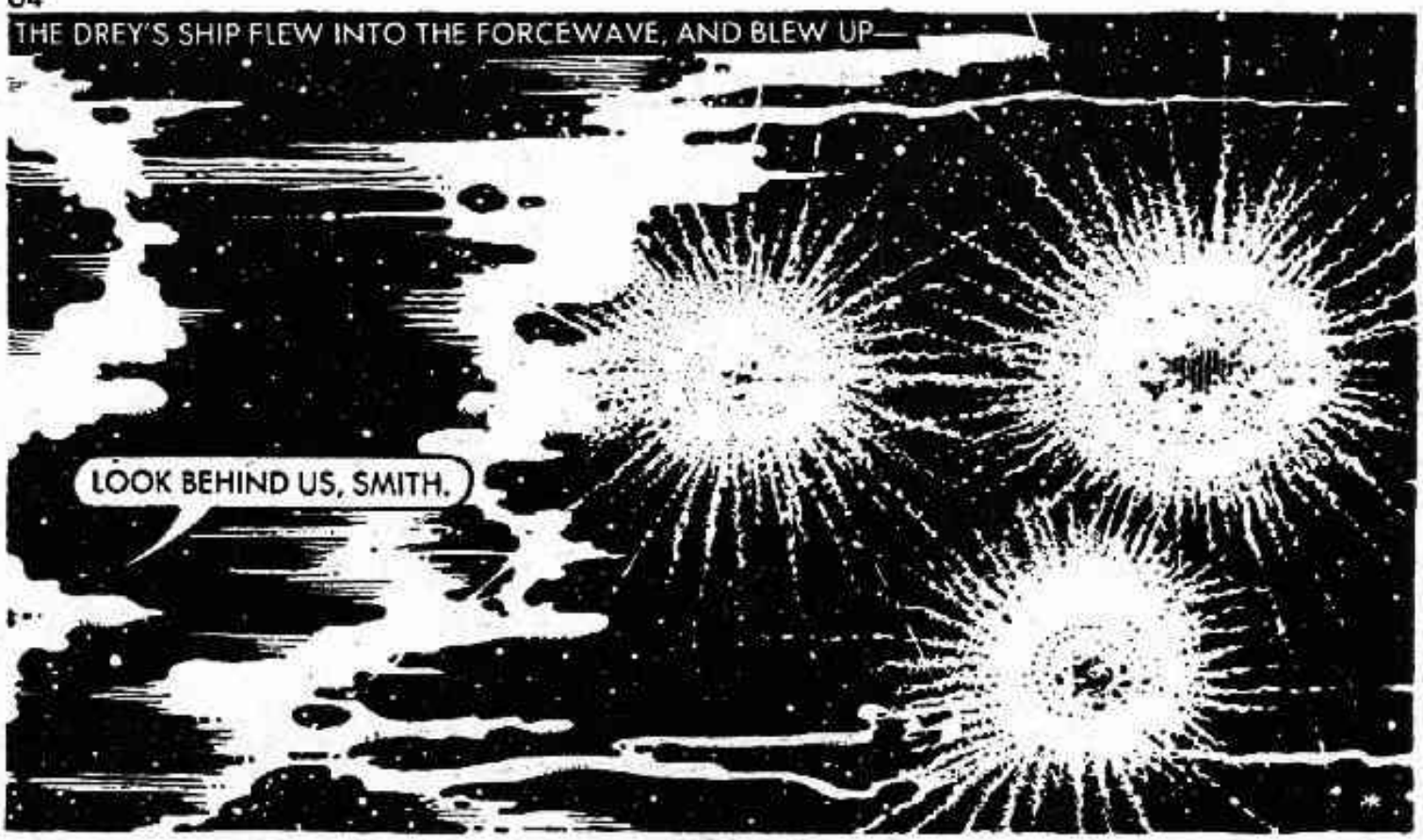

THEY WENT STRAIGHT TO THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER.
MY MEN ARE UNLOADING THE CRYSTALS NOW. THE GENERATOR IS NEARLY COMPLETE.
I SEE WE HAVE ONLY A FEW HOURS LEFT.

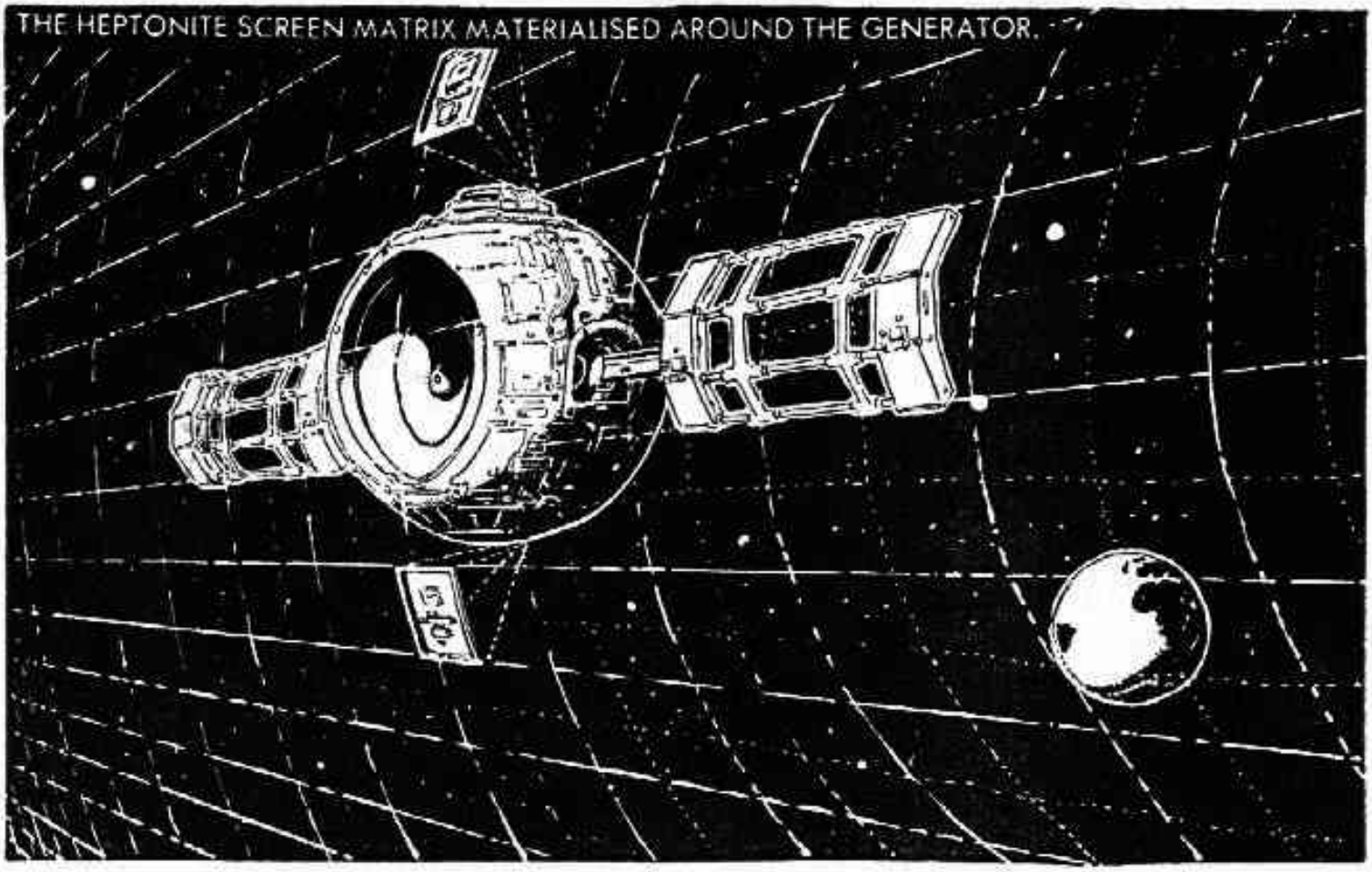
LESS THAN THAT I THINK! LOOK AT THE SCREEN.
START THE GENERATOR—IT'LL HAVE TO DO.
15 02 00
OFF

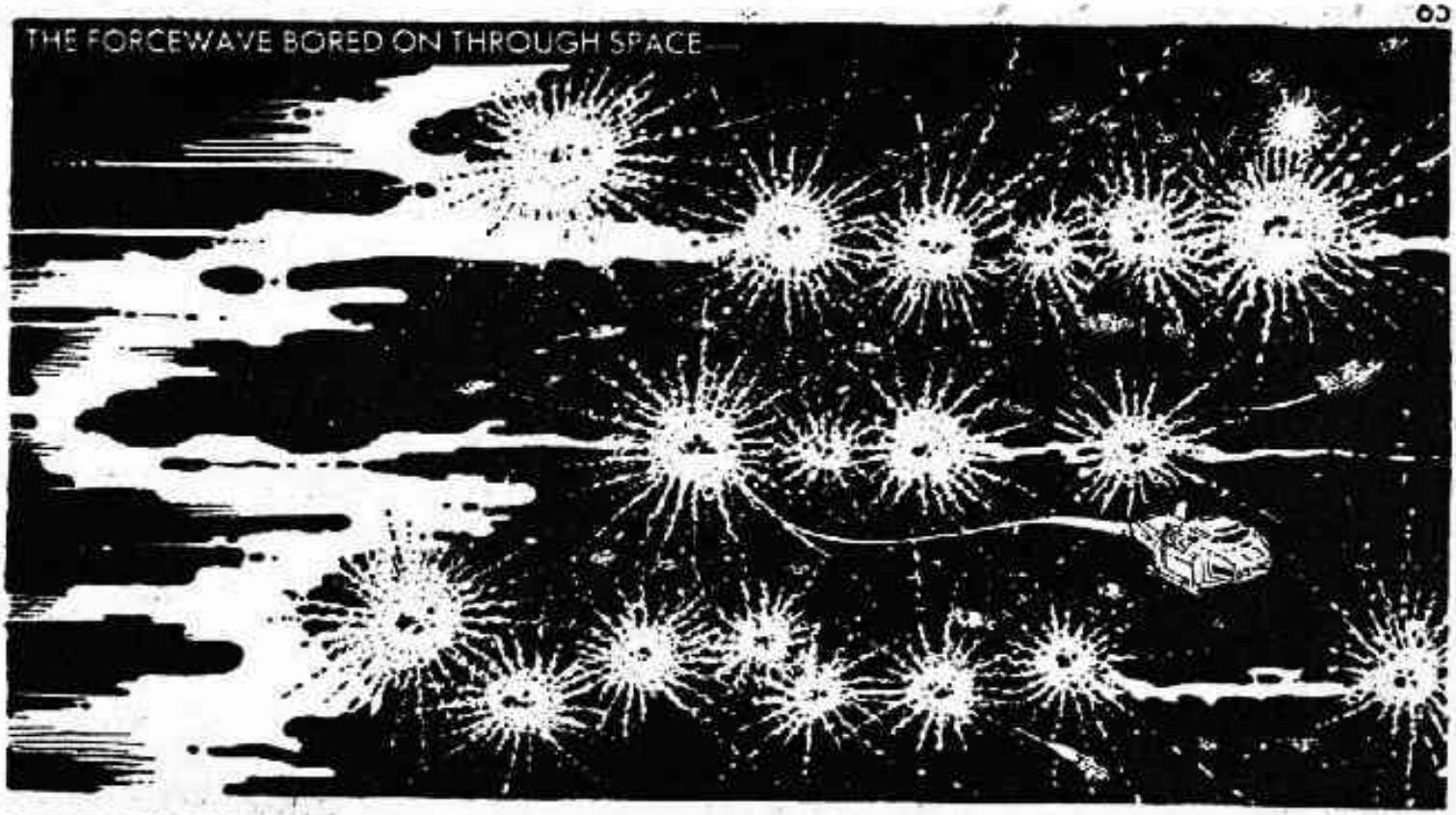
SHIPS, CAPTAIN, ABOUT FIFTY AND APPROACHING FAST.
THE FIRST DREY FLEET!
15 02 31
2

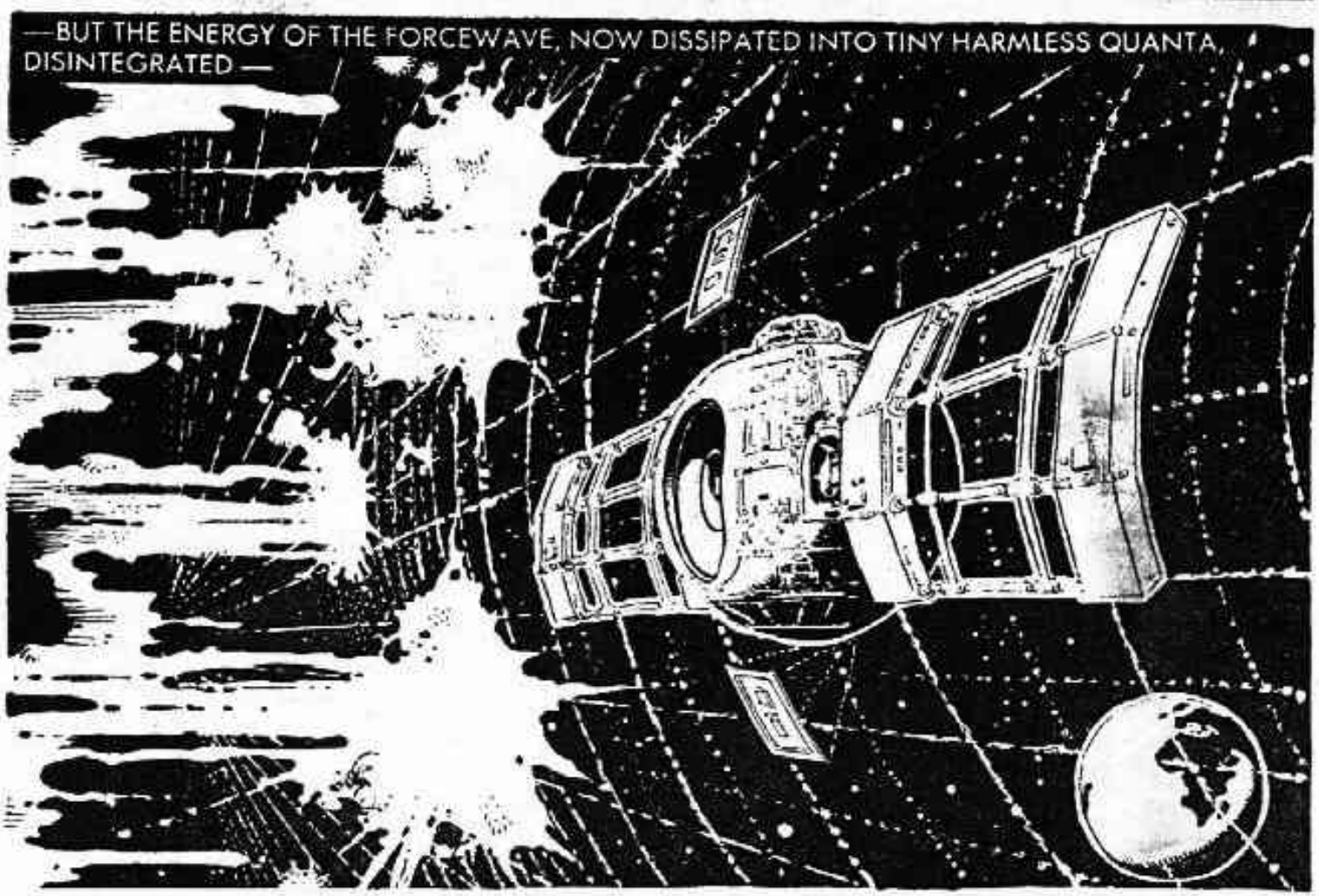

SMITH LEFT THE SPACE STATION —
WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF IT?
THAT'S THE DREY'S PERSONAL SHIP LEADING THE FLEET. HE MUST BE MAD!

CLEAR OUR MEN OUT OF THE AREA. WE'LL TRY TO HOLD THE MAGNONS OFF UNTIL THE MATRIX HAS BUILT UP TO FULL STRENGTH.
SMITH DIVED INTO THE MAGNON FLEET.
BUT THE FORCEWAVE IS TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT.


THE DREY'S SHIP FLEW INTO THE FORCEWAVE, AND BLEW UP—
LOOK BEHIND US, SMITH.


THE HEPTONITE SCREEN MATRIX MATERIALISED AROUND THE GENERATOR.


THE FORCEWAVE BORED ON THROUGH SPACE—


—BUT THE ENERGY OF THE FORCEWAVE, NOW DISSIPATED INTO TINY HARMLESS QUANTA, DISINTEGRATED —

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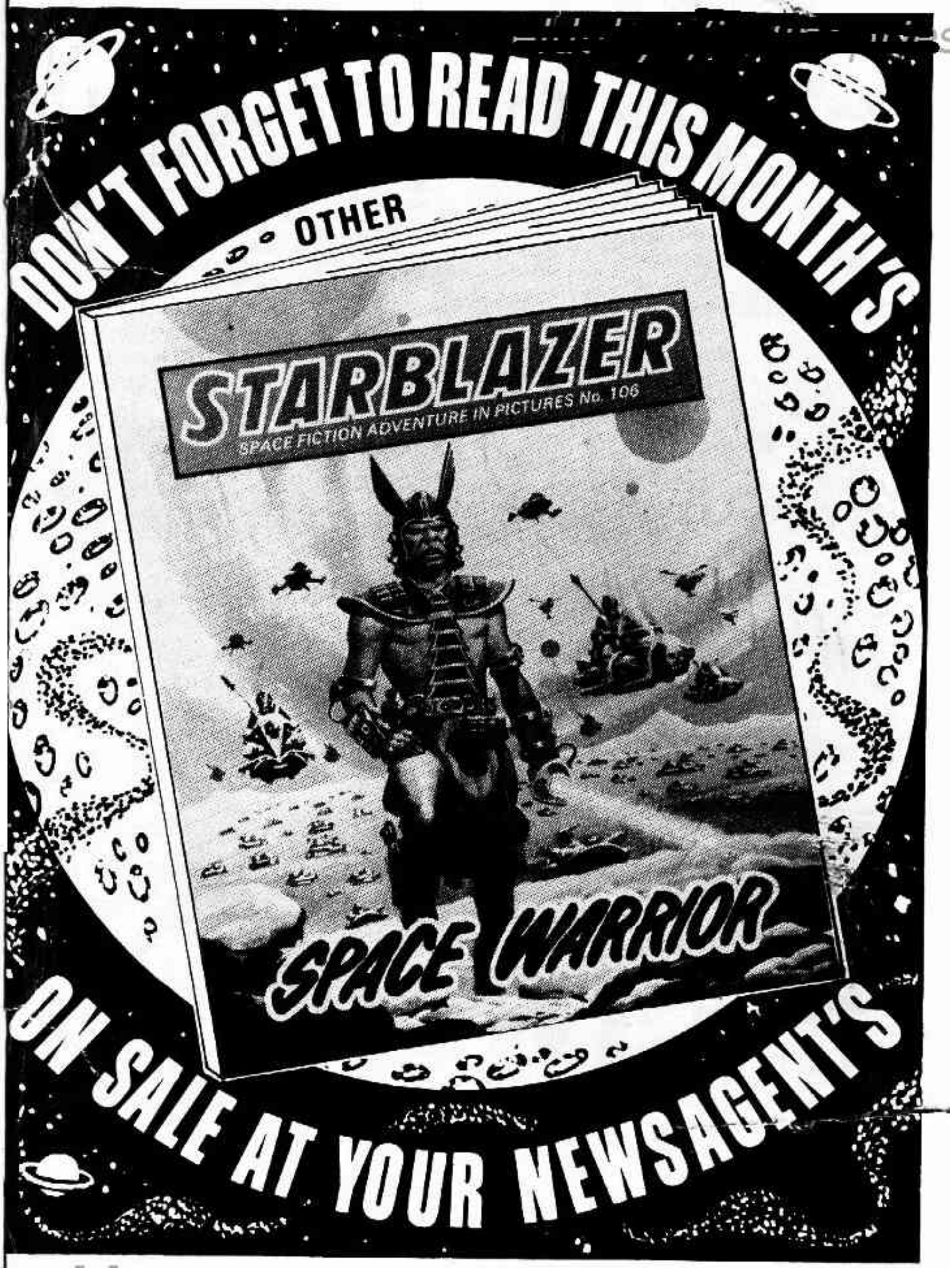
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GUIDE TO THE SPACEMEN 10

Major Leroy Gordon Cooper Jnr., 36, USAF flew the final Mercury mission, Faith 7, on May 15, 1963. The mission lasted 1 day 10 hr. 19 min. 9 sec. Cooper's next flight was Gemini 5 on August 21, 1965. This lasted 7 days 22 hr. 55 min. 14 sec. Cooper is now president of a company in Los Angeles.